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The St. Nicholas Series

EDITED BY THE REV. DOM BEDE CAMM, O.S.B.

FATHER MATHEW



The St. Nicholas Series

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Father Mathew.

FATHER AND SON

BY

KATHARINE TYNAN



LONDON

MACMILLAN & CO. LTD.

4, ADAM STREET, ADELPHI, W.C.

1908



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Nihil Obstat.

D. BEDA CAMM

Censor Deputatus

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WESTMONASTERII,

die 14. Januarii, 1908.

FATHER MATHEW

CHAPTER I

HIS CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

THEOBALD MATHEW, who administered the Total Abstinence Pledge to seven million people and changed the whole aspect of life in Ireland during the years of his labours, was a most human Saint. In his humanity, his robustness, his virility, his great, generous, loving personality, lies the secret of the enormous influence he wielded. He was by nature no ascetic. With him, once he had entered on his great crusade, it must have been that to labour was to pray. It was in the fitness of things that he should not have belonged to a contemplative order of priests. He was of the Friars Minor, the Capuchins, the Little Brothers, in a secondary sense, of St. Francis of Assisi, his Father, whom in

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many ways—in simplicity, in love, in a glowing personality which won hearts and souls to him—he greatly resembled. He had a handsome, highly-coloured, strongly-marked face, a face of the South, such as one often meets with in Ireland. And he had an ardent southern temperament.

He was born on the 10th of October, 1790, at Thomastown, the splendid house of the Mathews, Earls of Llandaff, to a younger branch of which family his father, James Mathew, belonged. He was the fourth son of James Mathew's marriage with Anne Whyte of Cappa-Whyte, a lady famous for her beauty and sweetness of character.

James Mathew appears to have stood in the relationship of an adopted son to the then Earl of Llandaff, and to have governed and managed the affairs of Thomastown during his early years of marriage. Thomastown was a magnificent place, an Irish palace, now, alas, falling into ruins and long deserted. Its park was two thousand acres in extent, and splendidly wooded, with superb avenues and groves of oak and beech and chestnut, fine as anything

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in England, where, unlike Ireland, the trees bear witness to long ages of established peace.

Thomastown spreads its long, winged front at the head of the Golden Vein, that country of fat richness that runs between the Galtees and the Kilmanagh mountains.

Theobald Mathew was eight years old at the time of the Irish Rebellion of 1798. They were not in the thick of it at Thomastown. Tipperary was little, if at all, concerned with the famous rebellion, though it has been busy enough in later national movements. Ireland is a country of long memories, in which the past has an actuality undreamt of in more fortunate countries. Not so long ago I heard a man say seriously: "A Wexford man can never forgive a Tipperary man, because Tipperary didn't rise in '98." But be sure they heard at Thomastown of the terrible things that were going on in Kildare and Wexford and Wicklow and Meath. Be sure there was much discussion among the troops of servants in the great kitchens at Thomastown, where Master Toby, as he was known to the household, used to

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come listening, a little *gobemouche*, to the recital of the horrors and miseries of those days.

Once he heard the servants say that a neighbouring gentleman, very much opposed to the popular views, had horns and a tail. Master Toby, wishing to see for himself, saddled his pony and rode off several miles to get a good look at the monster, and was grievously disappointed at finding him, outwardly at least, like anybody else.

In those days he was a great favourite with Lord Llandaff and with his daughter the Lady Elizabeth, who had an affection for him which lasted to the day of her death. If the servants or the people about the place sought any favour from Lord Llandaff they used to ask Master Toby to be their intercessor. It was a rôle his generous heart made a delight to him.

He was his mother's darling; and his great joy in his childish years was to beg for feasts for his brothers and sisters. There were a good many of them—twelve children in all—and, considering their rapid increase, James Mathew had thought well to have a

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house of his own, although Thomastown, with its fifty bedrooms, could easily have lodged a greater family than his. His love of giving a feast was something that stuck to Toby all his life. Later, as a poor Capuchin in the most miserable monastery of two rooms in a Cork slum, he practised it, even when the feast had to be cooked in the room of Father Donovan, his fellow Franciscan, and served in his own. He had inherited the extraordinary Mathew hospitality of which Dean Swift had experience, as witness "Irish Varieties":

"Thomastown contained fifty apartments for guests, with suitable accommodation for their servants. When a guest arrived Mr. Mathew showed him his apartment, saying, 'This is your castle; here you are to command as absolutely as in your own house. You may breakfast, dine, or sup here whenever you please, and invite such of the guests to accompany you as may be most agreeable to you. From this moment you are never to know me as master of the house, but only to consider me one of the guests.' In order to put an end to all ceremony at

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mealtime he took his place at random at the table, and thus, all ideas of precedence being laid aside, the guests seated themselves without any regard to rank or quality. . . . He kept twenty choice hunters in his stable for the use of those who were not properly mounted. . . . Dean Swift and Doctor Sheridan set out on horseback. They had scarce reached the inn where they were to spend the first night when a coach and six arrived, sent to convey them the remainder of their journey to Thomastown; at the same time bringing store of the choicest viands and wine for their refreshment. . . . When they came within sight of the house the Dean, astonished at its magnitude, cried out, 'What, in the name of God, can be the use of such a vast building?' When he was told the number of guests, Swift, in his usual manner, bawled out to the coachman to stop, and bade him turn about and drive back to Dublin, 'for he could not think of mixing with such a crowd.' "

Says Mr. Frank Mathew, Father Mathew's grand-nephew and biographer, continuing this passage:

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“However, the Dean changed his mind, was welcomed at Thomastown, fell in with the ways of the house; and for three days lived as if in his own home, without seeing his host or any of the guests. The guests were well pleased that he should remain secluded; he was then at the height of his fame, was the idol of the people, but a terror to his own class.

“On the fourth day Swift entered the room where the company were assembled before dinner. One can fancy the sudden hush among the periwigged dandies and the pretty butterflies of fashion, when the terrible Dean enters, fluttering the doves. However, the dismay is needless; the Dean proves to be in sunny humour; he addressed Mr. Mathew in one of the finest complimentary speeches ever made. . . . He concluded his speech by saying, ‘Now, ladies and gentlemen, I am come to live among you, and it shall be no fault of mine if we do not pass our time agreeably.’ Instead of a fortnight, he spent four months there; and during all that time he was the heart of the rejoicings, the master of the revels.”

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This hospitality and love of feast-giving remained with Father Mathew through his life, as you shall see later. The day before his death, in disobedience to his doctor's orders, he was discovered in the act of giving a feast to a party of poor boys. And we can imagine that when he had taken the great step with, "Here goes in the Name of God!" and signed the Total Abstinence Pledge, it must have cost him something to make his dinners into water-drinking feasts: for he yet gave dinners, although after he had signed the pledge no wine appeared on his table.

In a sense he was a most unlikely person to become the great Apostle of Temperance, and it was a triumph of grace over heredity and traditions, perhaps over Nature, that he should have so become, for he was singularly full of the joy of life, like his father, St. Francis, who in his unregenerate days was of the golden company of young gallants, and, clad in velvet and silk, sang serenades under the windows of the maidens of Assisi by night.

Father Mathew's earliest and fullest bio-

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grapher, John Francis Maguire, tells us that Anne Mathew, looking round her full dinner-table one day, said regretfully: "Is it not sad? I have nine sons and not one is going to be a priest." For to have a son a priest is the sacred dream of the Irish mother, as a more sacred hope and dream was of the mothers of Judea. George, one of the sons, had had a leaning towards the priesthood, and had even been presented with a chalice and a set of vestments by an overconfident relative; but the inclination had disappeared with his growth.

There was a little silence, and the disappointing George hung his head. But suddenly small Theobald lifted his voice:

"Don't be unhappy, Mother," he said, "I will be a priest."

And from that hour he was looked upon as "the little priest," that sacrosanct and privileged person in many an Irish household.

He was his mother's darling and preferred to be with his mother rather than with the other boys at their games, or when they roamed through the beautiful country. They

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were by this time in their new home, Rathcloheen, not far from Thomastown, and between the two houses, with his mother and his constant friend, Lady Elizabeth, his happiest hours were spent.

He had certain supernatural qualities that marked him out as the future priest even in childhood. One was a great love of the poor, which was to become a master-passion with him in later life. Also he had a special reverence for the Name of God, which he pronounced with a peculiar sweetness and gravity. To James Mathew's hospitable house, as to Thomastown, came great numbers of beggars, an Irish house of quality in those days resembling in this particular a mediaeval monastery. The old, the halt, the blind, impostors as well as genuine cases, were all known to and much esteemed by Master Toby. One wishes that more was known of Toby and the beggars, for the Irish beggars are a race apart, marked by their wit, their broad humour, their insolence, their philosophy.

Master Toby was called by his brothers "The Pet" and "Miss Molly," because of

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his fondness for his mother's company; but he was very far from being an effeminate boy.

One thing in which he must have been at loggerheads with his brothers and their companions was his great tender-heartedness where beasts and birds were concerned. He held what is called sport in abhorrence. His brothers had their coursing dogs, their guns, their ferrets. Once Toby looked on at the death-struggles of a hare, and from that time sickened at the thought of such diversions. The sight of the dead birds brought in by his brothers caused him the acutest suffering. He was always a lover of animals, and in his later life had always a dog, a cat, a bird, even though his crowded days could have had little room for pet animals.

He was exceedingly gentle in speech, and this, one imagines, must have been a gift of God rather than a gift of Nature, for he was impetuous and hot-headed under the gentleness, and in his Evangelical days the hot speech would occasionally burst out for the self-indulgent and the back-slider.

He was oddly neat and tidy in his habits.

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At Thomastown, when he was still a very small child, he found a pair of Lady Elizabeth's silk stockings hanging on a chair before the breakfast-parlour fire to be "aired." This was a very characteristic happening in an Irish household. Toby discovered the stockings there, and in a fine rage flung them into the fire. Presently there was a hue and cry for Lady Elizabeth's stockings, and Toby calmly announced that he had burnt them. "But why?" asked some one. "They should not have been at the breakfast-parlour fire," answered the young reformer. "Toby is quite right," said Lady Elizabeth. "The breakfast-parlour was no place for them."

He kept his extreme neatness during his life. He never forgot, and no one else ever forgot, that he was a gentleman born. He conducted his great campaign in a characteristically old-fashioned gentleman's attire, wearing a voluminous white neck-cloth, knee-breeches, black silk stockings and high boots.

He had a great taste for engineering in his boyish days, and there is a record of his

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having turned on his brothers to widen and deepen the water-course which brought the water supply from Thomastown to Rathcloheen, he himself the happiest and busiest among the labourers. It was said that he could never see a stream in later life without thinking upon all that its unused energies could accomplish. So it was perhaps in the rightness of things that he should have been the one destined to set water flowing through the length and breadth of Ireland.

At twelve years old Lady Elizabeth, who charged herself with his education, sent him to a good school at Kilkenny, where it is not recorded that he achieved anything very brilliant. He distinguished himself, however, by running away from school one Easter Eve, and tramping the thirty or forty miles to Rathcloheen. He arrived home hungry and footsore; and it is good to know that his mother, thinking only of the love for her and his home which had prompted the escapade, received him into a most loving embrace. He was a boy to be very home-sick. His family affections were of the strongest, and one can well believe

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that that flight was irresistible. But he must have had his misgivings about his reception, for we read that to the last day of his life he would recall the sweetness of his welcome on that Easter Eve.

CHAPTER II

MISSIONARY YEARS

WHEN Theobald was seventeen he entered Maynooth College to prepare for the priesthood; but his Maynooth career was not destined to be of long duration. The year after his entrance his incurable hospitality was his undoing. He gave a feast in his rooms to some of his fellow students, which was against the rules. The feast was somewhat uproarious, and the feast-giver was caught in the very act. While his case was under consideration, dreading expulsion, he left the College of his own will.

A few years later he joined the Capuchin Order and was consecrated a priest on Easter Saturday, 1814. His first mission was at Kilkenny, where he soon attracted attention to himself as a preacher and spiritual director. The friars, who had borne so much

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of the burden and heat of the penal days, when a brown-frocked Capuchin hanging from a tree was no infrequent object in an Irish landscape, would at this time seem to have been obscure beyond reason. Their missions were of the poorest. There was so little money to keep the secular clergy alive that the regulars worked as it were by stealth, almost under the shadow of ecclesiastical disapproval. They could not administer the Sacraments of Baptism and Extreme Unction, or the Sacrament of Matrimony, without special permission. To this day they are not allowed to administer the Paschal Communion in their churches.

A false report that Father Mathew had broken the latter ordinance led to his leaving Kilkenny. He was seated in his confessional, before which great numbers waited for their turn to approach him, when a messenger entered the church and handed him a letter from the Bishop commanding him to cease hearing confessions. He stood up at once, and, turning to the crowd of penitents, said: "Go to your other priests. I have no longer power to hear your con-

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fessions." And walked away out of the church.

A rumour which distressed him greatly spread through Kilkenny to the effect that he had been suspended. The Bishop was not long finding out that he had been misinformed, and regretted his hasty action to the end of his life. Explanations and apologies followed, but Father Mathew had made up his mind to leave Kilkenny.

His next mission was at Cork, where the Little Friary, of which the two inmates were himself and an older priest, Father Donovan, was of the tiniest. Indeed it could not well have housed more than two friars, since it consisted only of two rooms and a small attic which was afterwards turned into an organ-loft for the little chapel.

Anything more pleasing to the Saint who was the lover of poverty than the *ménage* could not well be imagined. When Father Donovan was about to welcome Father Mathew the first difficulty to arise was the question of bed-clothes for the strange young priest. There were none. Doubtless Father Donovan, a great character, brusque of man-

FATHER MATHEW

ner and often rough of speech, but a saint and a lover of the poor, had given them away, as at one time or another he had given all his own belongings. Money he had none: so he was reduced to borrowing the bed-clothes. As for the dinner, that was a more difficult matter still. It was settled by Father Donovan's taking the new arrival to call at a certain hospitable house, and, after a few minutes' conversation, hurrying away, having first impressed upon Father Mathew to wait there till his return. Time passed and Father Donovan did not come back. Father Mathew at last became extremely uncomfortable, although his kind hosts showed no sign of being weary of him. But Father Donovan came not. And had he not bidden his young brother to await his return? At last the dinner-bell rang, and Father Mathew, covered with confusion, stood up to take his leave. But, would such a thing be permitted in an Irish house? "No, indeed, Father Mathew," said his hostess, "you must give us the pleasure of dining with us." And that was the beginning of a firm friendship.

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In Cork Father Mathew's great personal charm soon won him friends. Father Donovan was delighted with him, and had no brusquerie for him.

"I'm going to get a lovely young priest," was the way in which Father Donovan announced Theobald Mathew's coming to a privileged lady of his congregation.

"Indeed then, and I hope you'll be kind to him," said the lady, who feared perhaps that Father Donovan might mete out to the new-comer the hard treatment he gave himself, denying himself almost the necessities of life that the poor might be fed.

A little later some one meeting him in the street said to him: "Indeed, Father Donovan, there's no standing you since your young Apostle came to you"; which speech throws a light on the feeling of the old priest for the young one.

Father Donovan, by the way, had had many adventures. He had been through the French Revolution, had been condemned to death and actually carried in the tumbril to the guillotine, from which he was only saved by the most unexpected interposition.

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A hard rind and a sweet core he might be to the rest of the world. To Theobald Mathew he was all sweetness.

It must have been a great change from the refinement and plenty of Rathcloheen, from the splendours of Thomastown, to the Little Friary. His room was of the most miserable kind. The chapel and the two tiny rooms adjoining it were in a dark slum; the famous Father Arthur O'Leary who had founded the Cork Convent had been used to speak of himself as "a poor friar, buried between salt-houses and stables"; and the situation remained unchanged.

Father Mathew's room, communicating with the cock-loft above the chapel, was not only airless in itself but was filled with the fumes that arose from the garments of the humble folk who frequented the chapel, whose occupations were often most unsavoury. His confessional was in a dark corner of the chapel. Thither came crowds of penitents attracted by the fame of the young Apostle. There would be the curer of salt-fish, the workers in the chandlery with its most intolerable of smells, butchers'

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slaughterers, the makers of sausages and black-puddings, the lamp-lighters, whose clothes reeked with fish oil, which was at that time burnt in the street lamps.

The confessional was an enclosed place about four feet square, just holding a chair for the priest. There was no possibility of ventilation. He was there some days at five o'clock in the morning, so that the working-people might find him on their way to work. He would remain till eight o'clock or nine o'clock, according to his hour for Mass. After breakfast he was there again. On Saturday or the vigil of a feast he did not leave till ten or eleven o'clock at night; and it was no uncommon thing for him to spend fifteen hours in the confessional. How often he must have thought of Thomastown overlooking the Golden Vein between the mountains; of dear Rathcloheen with its country airs, where the love was that was dear to his affectionate heart!

At first he could hardly endure the rank closeness of the confessional: but in time he became hardened to it. His fame as a confessor spread and increased. People

FATHER MATHEW

from the outlying places came in and crowded his confessional still more: and people whose occupations brought them into Cork from a distance would not return till they had been to confession to Father Mathew. Not a carman from Kerry bringing a firkin of butter to Cork market but would find out the Chapel of the Little Friary and kneel to the renowned young priest.

Once on a Sunday morning he had been hearing confessions from six o'clock, leaving off to celebrate Mass and returning to the confessional again. The night before he had not remained there till eleven o'clock, and on this Sunday morning he had been four hours at it breakfastless.

Just as he was crossing the chapel on his way to breakfast four sailors rolled in, seeking confession.

"I can't hear you," he said impatiently. "You should have come at the proper time. You must come again."

The sailors went off dispiritedly, and just at that moment a pious poor woman touched him on the arm.

MISSIONARY YEARS

"Ah, sir, they may not come again," she said.

He always said afterwards that through her the Holy Ghost had spoken to him. He ran after the sailors, brought them back, heard their confessions, and then—most characteristic touch—brought them up to his room and gave them breakfast.

A Cork servant-maid described his methods as a confessor:

"Sure the worse you were in the beginning the more he'd like you: and there'd be nothing he wouldn't do for you: but if you didn't improve quickly there'd be no treatment too bad for you."

A lovable story of him at this time is of his great concern for the eldest son of a family to which he was greatly attached who was seriously ill with typhus. Their house was a mile and a half from the Little Friary, but every morning in the gray dawn Father Mathew might have been seen climbing the high walls which enclosed the house and garden, so as to have the earliest possible intelligence of how the sick boy had passed the night without having to rouse

FATHER MATHEW

the lodge-people at such an unearthly hour.

He was at Cork for twenty-four years, during which he passed from youth to middle age. He did many great things as well as his work in the confessional and the pulpit. He established schools and societies. He relieved innumerable cases of distress. He nursed the sick in the great cholera epidemic of 1832. He was the friend of the widow and the orphan. His favourite texts were "Blessed are the merciful," and "By this shall every man know you for My disciples that ye love one another." He read the Holy Scriptures from beginning to end, finding time somehow for a good deal of other reading besides. He gave his money to the poor—remember he came of a family of position and prosperity and had friends in high places!—and when he had any over he gave a dinner to his friends in the two rooms of the Little Friary. His giving was of the most delicate as well as the most generous. There are endless stories of it—how a family not knowing how to pay the rent or provide the means of living, sitting together miserably, would hear a knock at

MISSIONARY YEARS

the door, and a mysterious envelope would be handed in enclosing a bank-note.

He had a passion for giving. I like now to think of those dinner-parties of his.

“Theobald Mathew was never so happy,” said one of his guests, “as when he had half-a-dozen of us round him. He was as good a host as ever lived: full of gaiety and as easily amused as a child.”

At this date wine and spirits were not excluded from his dinner-table, and though he partook very moderately of wine himself his friends were welcome to use it as they would. Of his giving propensities the old clerk of the Little Friary used to say:

“If Cork was paved with gold and Father Mathew could do what he liked with it there wouldn’t be a paving-stone left in Cork by the end of the year.”

He had a most loving manner to his friends, and indeed to the world in general, and his usual manner of address for the lowest as well as the highest was “My dear.”

He used to say that he would rather be imposed upon nineteen times than that the twentieth deserving one should go away

FATHER MATHEW

unhelped. To other people he preached his own rule of life: "Give! give! give! What you have is given you from God: and you will never be the worse of what you give in His Name."

His good looks, his obvious air of the gentleman, helped his work among the people the most ready in the world to yield respect to good birth. His appearance won him half the battle. The old folk in Ireland who took the pledge from Father Mathew, now fast disappearing, will tell you of his handsome presence.

"He had a beautiful leg," said an old woman in Cork to Mr. Frank Mathew, "and when he walked in the streets everyone would be takin' off their hats to him. Sure he might as well have had no hat to him at all, for it was never on his head."

And at the other end of the social scale the Duke of Devonshire bore witness :

"Mr. Mathew is a man of such divine countenance and a manner so marvellously winning that I could easily understand how the people are moved to fall down before him."

CHAPTER III

“THEOBALD MATHEW, NO. I”

FATHER MATHEW was a man of a peculiar broad-mindedness, loving and believing in his fellow men without distinction of creed. When he first walked in the streets of Cork arm in arm with a parson the people ran out of their houses to look at the strange sight. It was to be seen many a time during the future career of the Apostle of Temperance.

It might be said of him that if he loved all sinners for the sake of the souls that might be saved, in a special sense he was the friend of good men. During those years in which he toiled for good and fought evil in his obscure quarters in the Little Friary he had come into contact with the body of Cork Quakers, men whose purses and influence might always be counted upon in a good cause.

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The Quakers had everywhere won the respect, even the affection, of the people for their admirable lives, their straight dealing, their charity, their high-mindedness: but those who admired them most yet looked upon them as cranks, preaching an impossible rule of conduct, faddists, advocates of measures not possible or desirable for the ordinary man.

One of these impossible doctrines was Total Abstinence. Although Total Abstinence had been preached as far back as St. Cyprian and St. Jerome and has had its advocates probably as long as drunkenness has been in the world, yet the first Total Abstinence Society of comparatively modern days was founded at Preston in 1832. It had its following in Cork among the Quakers aforesaid.

One of these Quakers, William Martin, was a Governor of the Cork House of Industry, the workhouse of those days, which was full of the wretched victims of the vice of drunkenness. Father Mathew was also a Governor. William Martin was known as the Grandfather of the Temperance cause.

“THEOBALD MATHEW, No. 1”

He, with Nicholas Dunscombe, and Richard Dowden, a Unitarian, were the most prominent workers in this cause in Cork. But, be sure, they had very little chance of reaching the people. The creeds, between which to-day in Ireland the gulf yawns sufficiently wide, were in that day even more widely separated. The Catholic Celt could hardly fail to have suspicion of a movement run by non-Catholics. The devoted band of Cork teetotalers had worked long almost in vain. But William Martin had marked out Father Mathew, with his enormous influence among his poor co-religionists, as the man for the work, and for that reason William ought to be remembered as long as Father Mathew himself.

When they sat together on the Board of the House of Industry, whenever a particularly bad instance of the ruin caused by drunkenness came before them, William Martin would say: “Oh, Theobald Mathew, if thee would only give thy aid to the cause, what good thee would do for these poor creatures!”

To be sure indulgence in strong drink

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was the fashion of those days. The "three-bottle man" was an institution, and hardly a gentleman of the country but had to be carried to his bed nightly; and what could be expected from the peasants, lacking all comfort in their miserable starved lives but that they should emulate the doings of their betters?

"Oh, Theobald Mathew, thee hast a mission from God to do this work!"

The words of the persistent Quaker began to haunt him. Only Quakers and such faddy folk in those days had qualms about even the misuse of what some called "one of the gifts of God." But Theobald Mathew, gifted with nerves and imagination, had his fears and shrinkings, although he was and ever had been the most moderate man in the use of food as well as of drink. He was asked once what had first turned his thoughts to total abstinence.

"My dear," he said, "I thought how terrible a thing it would be if ever I should become a drunkard."

Once when he was in great grief for the death of his friend, Father Donovan, and

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suffering much from loneliness and sadness, he had, or thought he had, a temptation from the devil. As he sat one evening in the dreary little room alone, for he had refused the invitations of his friends, a voice seemed to whisper in his ear: “Father Mathew, that Cognac in the cupboard is delicious. You have not tasted it. Why don’t you try it?” “No, no. Tea is much better,” he replied. “But you didn’t taste the Cognac,” the voice persisted. “Just try it and you will find how good it is.” At this Father Mathew seized his hat and rushed off to a brother priest for companionship and help. His biographer, Maguire, says that the next day the Cognac which had been a present to Father Mathew was despatched to a friend. A characteristic touch this last. Twenty years later it would have been spilt out on the ground.

It must have been while the importunities of William Martin were still knocking at his conscience that he believed he saw a ghost. Says Mr. Frank Mathew:

“He used to tell a strange story of how he had once seen a ghost. He often sat half

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the night in his confessional, to suit working people who could not come to him in the daytime. One night, when he was in bad health and tired out, he found himself alone in his church at midnight. Suddenly it was lit up by a mysterious light, and he saw a priest standing on the altar step. It was Father Donovan, who had formerly been the chaplain of this church and one of his closest friends, but had died some years before. He spoke to Father Donovan and was answered, but would not repeat what passed between them, except that Father Donovan had urged him to preach total abstinence. All his life he believed that he then spoke with a man risen from the dead. It is easy to believe that this ghost-seeing was the result of his overwrought and unstrung state; still, it throws a sidelight on him and on the nervous nature that underlay his calmness. This was some time before he began his temperance work."

Preaching in later days he said:

"I never knew what true happiness was till I became a teetotaler; for until I became so I could never feel that I was free or out



“Don’t be unhappy, Mother, I will be a priest.”

[P. 9.]

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of danger, or could say to myself, with confidence, that I would not at one time or another be that most degraded thing—a drunkard. Let no one tell me that he is safe enough, that he has no occasion to take the pledge, that he is above temptation. There is no one strong enough, or firm enough, to be certain to resist temptation, no one so strong or firm that he may not fall. I have seen the stars of heaven fall and the cedars of Lebanon laid low.”

Indeed, it was said of him after he had joined the Total Abstiners that he had a strange happiness, something new added to him who had always been the most cheery and merry and genial of mortals.

He hesitated long before he could see that it was his duty to leave the things he was doing for the sake of Temperance. Remember what he was as a spiritual director, as a preacher, and you will understand how it might well seem that he might be giving up the substance for the shadow, that he might be mistaking the purpose and will of God for him. But ever at his ears whispered the words of the Quaker: “Oh, Theobald

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Mathew, if thee would only give thy aid to the cause what thee might do for these poor creatures!" And: "Oh, Theobald Mathew, thee has a mission from God to do this work!"

At last, alone in his oratory, in prayer, on his knees, the answer came to him. For this work he was selected, this work which only he could do. Everything else must be laid aside, left for others: for him it was to bring a new soul into Ireland.

It was on a day early in April, 1833, that a message reached William Martin that Father Mathew wished to see him that evening. Maguire says:

"William, as he afterwards assured his friends, 'had a presentiment of what was about to happen'; and for that day he carried his sixty-eight years as jauntily as if they had been only thirty. At the appointed moment he was at the door, which was open for his reception; and there at the threshold stood his friend, Theobald Mathew, ready to receive him, his handsome countenance radiant with kindness and good nature. 'Welcome! Mr. Martin; welcome! my dear

“THEOBALD MATHEW, No. 1”

friend. It is very kind of you to come to me at so short a notice, and so punctually, too.’ ‘I was right glad to come to thee, Theobald Mathew, for I expected that thee had good news for me.’ ‘Well, Mr. Martin, I have sent for you to assist me in forming a temperance society in this neighbourhood.’ ‘I knew it!’ said William: ‘something seemed to tell me that thee wouldst do it at last.’ ‘My dear sir, it was not a matter to be undertaken lightly, and I feel that there are many difficulties in the way.’ ‘There are difficulties in everything we do,’ remarked William; ‘but thou knowest we must conquer them.’ ‘Very true, my dear friend, we must try and do so. You remember that a considerable time ago you spoke to me on the subject at the House of Industry.’ ‘I remember it well, and that I often spoke to thee about it, and told thee that thou were the only man that could help us.’ ‘At that time,’ continued Father Mathew, ‘I could not see my way clearly to take up the question; but I have thought much of it since then, and I think I do see my way now. I have been asked by several

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good men to take up the cause, and I feel I can no longer refuse. How are we to begin, Mr. Martin?' 'Easily enough,' said honest William. 'Appoint a place to hold the meeting, fix a day and hour—and that's the way to begin.' 'Will Tuesday next, at seven o'clock, in my schoolroom, answer?' asked Father Mathew. 'It's the very thing,' said William, who added, 'This will be joyful news for our friends. Oh! Theobald Mathew, thou hast made me a happy man this night.' An affectionate pressure of the hand was the response."

The memorable meeting of the new Temperance Society was held in Father Mathew's school-house, which nearly twenty years earlier he had established for the poor children of Cork. There was a small attendance, chiefly of the little party of teetotalers, who were in unbounded delight over their new recruit. Father Mathew was in the chair, and delivered a characteristically modest address. At the conclusion of the address he signed the pledge of the new society, which ran as follows:

"I promise to abstain from all intoxicating

“THEOBALD MATHEW, No. 1”

drinks, except used medicinally and by order of a medical man, and to discountenance the cause and practice of intemperance.”

“Here goes in the Name of God!” said Father Mathew, and signed his name, “Theobald Mathew, No. 1.”

Sixty others followed his example and signed the pledge that night.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST GLEANING

THE news that Father Mathew had joined the teetotalers was received at first with incredulous amazement, by the better classes, at all events. Surely, they said, he was too sensible a man to take up with such a fad, to join the ranks of fanatics, to preach an impossible self-denial! Besides, so many of his own relatives were engaged in the distilling or brewing trades. Was it likely he would embark on a crusade which, if successful, would prove an injury to them?

Such questions were set at rest by the announcement of Father Mathew's first public meetings. The poor crowded to them. He had always been their friend and they could trust him for anything. When they heard the amazing thing he preached, for to many of them in their wretched lives drink meant the one comfort and oblivion, they

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knew at least that what he advocated for their good must be worth considering. They flocked to him to hear what was this strange new panacea which he had discovered for the cure of all their ills. They watched his first converts eagerly to see if they would keep the pledge as he had assured them they would. Seeing that it was kept the people said among themselves that he had a special gift from Heaven to cure drunkenness, that he had founded the new society in obedience to a heavenly command given to him in a vision, and many other stories of the same kind. One can imagine how they went from lip to lip, gaining on their way a greater detail, a more wonderful interest. Crowds thronged to his meetings. In less than three months he had enrolled twenty-five thousand people in Cork alone.

They had to find a big covered place in which to assemble the multitudes who flocked to Father Mathew, and this was found in the Horse Bazaar, where time after time four thousand people were gathered together.

At first Father Mathew left most of the talking to others. They were "the old

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standards," as they say in Ireland: "Billy Martin" and his fellows, who for so long had been as a voice crying in the wilderness, and now to their bewilderment and delight found the harvest beyond what the most hopeful had dared to anticipate. There were the new recruits, the working-men, whom to their joy Father Mathew had freed from their slavery, making them strong and self-respecting. It is easy for an Irishman to become an orator: and the Horse Bazaar rang with fervid oratory night after night. The cause which had been so long looked upon as only fit for faddists proved as capable of exciting a passionate enthusiasm as any other of the great causes.

Father Mathew's hands were full enough administering the pledge. In five months from that day on which he headed the roll "In the Name of God," it contained a hundred and thirty thousand names: in less than nine months it was a hundred and fifty-six thousand. In January, 1839, two hundred thousand had signed.

These converts of Father Mathew's came not only from Cork itself, but from the out-

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lying districts to which his fame had spread, from Kerry, Waterford, Limerick, Clare, Tipperary, even from distant Galway. Not only did they flock into Cork by the public conveyances, but every day saw a procession of poor pilgrims tramping it into the town, carrying their little bundles, very often with their shoes slung over their shoulders, since these were for ceremonial occasions and bare-foot was better walking for every day. These poor pilgrims had tramped great distances and were usually very ill-provided. And Father Mathew, like his Master, had compassion on the multitude.

Time after time in reading of the Capuchin's wonderful career one pauses to wonder how he got all his money. To be sure the time came when he was in dire monetary straits, but in those years of his fruitful labours he seems to have scattered money royally, prodigally. One has to think of the widow's cruse and of the loaves and fishes.

The multitudes that came to Theobald Mathew doing the business of his Master, must not suffer. The pilgrims must be fed

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and warmed; they must, when they had come from a great distance, be provided with an easier way of getting home than by tramping once more the fifty or hundred miles. His motto was still "Give! give! give!" He gave with both hands; and he soon found himself in debt to the extent of fifteen hundred pounds.

The Mecca of the pilgrims was the familiar little two-roomed shanty in Cove Street, which had now been Theobald Mathew's habitation for more than a score years. I must quote from John Francis Maguire's racy account of the scenes that went on in Father Mathew's "Little Parlour," where all day long the priest administered the pledge.

"The lower apartment or parlour, which was on a level with the street, was converted into a reception room for those who came to take the pledge: and here was the pledge administered, and here were the names enrolled. It was in this celebrated apartment that scenes like the following might be witnessed. At all hours of the day and evening—even to ten or eleven o'clock at night—

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'batches' of ten, twenty, or even thirty, might be seen waiting to be enrolled. Some were sober and penitent; others, smelling strongly of their recent potations, and ashamed to commit themselves by uttering a word; more, boisterous and rude, their poor wives and mothers endeavouring to soothe and keep them under control. One of this class—a big, brawny fellow, with rough voice, bloodshot eyes, and tattered clothes—would roar out: 'I won't take the pledge. Is it me! What oc-oc-occashin have I for it? I won't demane myself by taking it. I always stood a trate and I'll stand it agin. Me take it! Let me go, woman! I tell you, lave me go!' 'Oh, Patsy, darlin', don't expose yourself. You know I'm for your good. And what would his reverence say to you if he heard you? Do, alanna, be quiet, an' wait for the holy priest.' 'Well, hould off of me, any way. Can't I take care of myself? Can't I do what I like? Who'll dare say I can't? Let me go, woman!'—and, bursting away from the trembling hands of the poor creature, who struggled to hold the drunken fool, Patsy would make a wild dash for the

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door amidst muttered expressions of sympathy such as—‘God help you, honest woman! ’Tis you’re to be pitied with that quare man.’ ‘Yes,’ another would remark, ‘an’ a fine man he is, and a decent man, too, if he’d only keep sober.’ But just as Patsy was about effecting his escape, and swearing that ‘he would never be the one of his name to demane himself by taking their dirty pledge,’ he was certain to be arrested by Father Mathew himself, who at a glance knew the nature of the case. Catching Patsy with a grasp stronger than that from which he had escaped, Father Mathew would say in a cheerful voice to Patsy, as if that gentleman had come of his own free will to implore the pledge at his hands—‘Welcome! welcome! my dear. Delighted to see you. Glad you are come to me. You are doing a good day’s work for yourself and your family. You will have God’s blessing on your head. Poverty is no crime, my dear child; it is sin alone that lowers us in the eyes of God. Kneel down, my dear (a strong pressure on Patsy’s shoulder, under which Patsy reluctantly sinks on his knees)

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and repeat the words of the pledge after me; and then I will mark you with the sign of the Cross, and pray God to keep you from temptation.' What could poor Patsy do, but yield, as that magnetic hand rested affectionately on his tangled locks? And so Patsy's name was added to the long muster-roll of the pledged.

We doubt if there were a tap-room in Cork in which a more decided odour of whisky and porter—or, as the phrase went, 'strong drink'—was apparent, than in 'Father Mathew's parlour'—especially on the evenings of Saturday and Monday, but more especially on the latter. The odour did not, however, ascend higher, for a door, covered with faded green baize, shut off the upper from the lower part of the house; into which, if the reader have no objection, we shall take a peep.

If Father Mathew dwelt in a cloister, he could not have lived more modestly and quietly than he did. His principal room—his *only* room, save that in which he slept—was at once breakfast- and dining-room, study and reception-room. It certainly did

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not exceed sixteen feet from wall to wall. Not a morsel of carpet concealed the well-washed boards; while the furniture consisted of the barest necessities—a centre-table, a sideboard, a side-table, some chairs, and a writing-desk. On the side-table was a large-sized bust of Lord Morpeth, the popular Secretary of Ireland, and friend of Father Mathew. Two enormous volumes of the Sacred Scriptures, one containing the Old, and the other the New, Testament, flanked the bust; and a glass filled with flowers, when flowers were in season, completed the adornment of this show-table. On the wall opposite the fireplace hung a good oil painting—a portrait of Cardinal Micara, the head of the Capuchins, who had constantly exhibited the deepest interest in the career of the illustrious Irish friar. Opposite the windows, a good engraving of a celebrated picture of the Holy Family was suspended. But, framed with richness and glazed with reverent care, was a marvellous production in worsted, intended to represent, and fondly believed by the donor and artist as well as by its grateful recipient to represent, the

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religious profession of St. Clare. The desk was fearfully bespattered with ink, and otherwise exhibited signs of its being an article of furniture more useful than ornamental. But everything, save the said desk, was neat and in perfect order. If it were poverty, it was poverty willingly and honestly assumed; but the neatness and order bespoke the presence and influence of a gentleman."

No doubt a good many people were opposed to these doings of Father Mathew, but like a good many other great reformers he found his most discouraging critic at home. This was John, Father Mathew's faithful servant. John had been a servant in a noble family, and great was his disgust at the class of people who not only flocked to "the Priest's Parlour" to take the pledge, but were in many cases entertained by him to meals afterwards. It must have been a bitter pill to poor John to have to serve such rascallions: and the only way open to him to show his disapproval—for Father Mathew knew how to make himself respected as well as loved—was the manner of magnificent endurance with which he repaired any mis-

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hap at table, a spilt tea-cup or some such thing, likely enough to occur when a nervous peasant sat to table with the great priest. John's manner as he mopped up the spilt tea and set a fresh cup before the offender would be more overwhelming than any rebuke.

Poor John! he had already had quite enough to put up with from the priest's strange fondness for children. Theobald Mathew was always devoted to children. One remembers him, on a Holy Thursday, rebuking the fussy lady whom he met driving before her a pack of slum-children who had gathered about the Altar of Repose, with loud expressions of admiration and delight. "You must remember Who it was that said: 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me,'" Father Mathew said, taking the hands of a couple of urchins and leading the whole band back into the Church. The priest's great recreation for years had been to entertain parties of children, carrying them off in summer weather to Lehenagh, the pleasant country house of his brother Charles. It had been hard enough for John to have

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to distribute the priest's tarts and cakes among the children his soul detested. But the happenings of these latter days were a harder pill for him to swallow.

Very soon practical results began to be apparent from Father Mathew's Temperance Society. The streets were quieter and safer: the police-court charges were much fewer in number: the people one met in the streets began to look well-fed and comfortable instead of in the old misery. All classes worked together in a greater harmony than of old. Father Mathew was opening Temperance Rooms in various parts of the city; and these proved a wonderful boon to the working-men, who could read their books and papers in a bright, cheerful room by a good fire and talk together of the things that interested them. Only those who know how low is the standard of comfortable living in Ireland can realize what the Temperance Reading-rooms meant to the men who had most probably their only experience of light and warmth in the gin-palaces before the wonder-worker, Father Mathew, arose among them.

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While he was engaged in this work he was still doing his ordinary duties as a priest, still hearing the crowds that flocked to his confessional, saying Mass, administering the Sacraments. One can hardly realize how he found room in his already crowded life for the labours of the Temperance Cause, but so it was. Herculean labours indeed for one man. Only an unbounded enthusiasm, only an immense love of his kind, only the blessing of God could have sustained Theobald Mathew in the new life upon which he had embarked.

CHAPTER V

MANY WITNESSES

IT was time now for him to go out from Cork and establish his Society in other places. Limerick was the first town to be visited, and his first meeting there took place in December, 1839.

His success was overwhelming. Father Mathew's fame had spread and the peasants swarmed into Limerick. "Even on the day before he was expected to arrive," says Maguire, "the principal roads were black with groups of people from all parts of the county, from the adjoining counties, and from the province of Connaught. During the next day, the streets of Limerick were choked with dense masses, with a multitude which it was impossible to count, and whose numbers were vaguely and wildly guessed at. It was an invasion, a taking of the town by storm. The necessities of life rose to famine prices, for who could have antici-

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pated such a mighty rush?—and where were food and drink to be found for those myriad mouths? What the civic authorities, the Bishop and his clergy, and the good citizens could do to relieve the necessities and minister to the wants of the strangers they generously did. The public rooms were thrown open for their shelter at night; for were the town ten times its size, it could scarcely have afforded ordinary sleeping accommodation for those who now stood in need of it. Father Mathew's reception was an ovation such as few men ever received; indeed still fewer had ever excited in a people the same blended feelings of love, reverence, and enthusiasm. Though with a serious and solemn purpose in their minds, the people rushed towards him as if possessed by a frenzy. They struggled and fought their way through living masses, through every obstacle, until they found themselves in his presence, at his feet, listening to his voice, receiving his blessing, repeating after him the words which emancipated them, as they felt, from sin, sorrow, and temptation."

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With considerate kindness, the authorities had taken such precautions as would have sufficed on an ordinary occasion; but the following testimony, from the late Rev. James Birmingham, P.P. of Borrisokane, will show with what result on this extraordinary occasion:

“So great was the rush of the temperance postulants that the iron railing opposite the house of Mr. Dunbar, the rev. gentleman’s brother-in-law, in which he had stopped, was carried away, and a number of persons were precipitated into the Shannon. Fortunately they were all safely picked up and no further accident occurred. I have been told by those who were spectators of the scene that some of the horses, with their riders, of the Scots Greys who attended to keep order, were occasionally lifted from the ground and carried away for a short distance by the rushing multitude; and so densely were the people crowded that several, in their eagerness to approach Mr. Mathew, ran along to their destination quietly and securely on the heads and shoulders of the vast assemblage.”

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After four days of incessant labour—preaching and exhorting so long as the least remnant of voice was left him—Father Mathew concluded one of the most successful of all his temperance missions, and one that imparted an amazing impetus to the progress of the cause, which, in those four days, had obtained 150,000 additional disciples.

From Limerick he went on to Waterford, where in three days he administered the pledge to eighty thousand people.

It was quite a common occurrence to see a drunken man take the pledge. Often the drunkenness would be the result of taking a last drop before being done with the drink for ever. People sometimes objected to Father Mathew's administering the pledge to drunken men, but his reply was: "I shall never refuse the pledge to anyone, and I find that people who come to me drunk remain faithful to the pledge." And there is plenty of evidence that this was so.

At Maynooth he enrolled twenty-five thousand, including many of the professors and students of the College. While at May-

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nooth he was the guest of the Duke of Leinster, who received him with the greatest possible distinction. At Parsonstown again the streets had to be kept by foot-soldiers and cavalry, so that the enormous crowds should not cause a calamity. In March, 1840, he was in Dublin, where he enrolled seventy thousand. This included many people of the higher class, and ladies. A band of Trinity College students joined him. Many things happened in Dublin that gladdened his heart: and he had the great joy always of knowing many instances in which people unselfishly forgot their own interests in the greater good of the many.

For instance, when in Dublin he called on George Roe, the distiller, whose munificence restored Christ Church, the smaller of Dublin's two cathedrals, to ask him for a donation towards his new church in Cork, which was not forgotten even amid the multifarious labours of the Temperance Movement. He approached Mr. Roe, as he said, in fear and trembling. "Father Mathew," said the munificent distiller, "no man has injured me in my business more than you

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have. But I forget all in the great good you have done my country." And he gave him a handsome sum for his church.

It is pleasant to remember indeed that in few instances did Father Mathew's private friendships suffer because of his Temperance crusade. The brewers and distillers of Cork were among his personal friends, and their purses were ever open to him; and when, in 1857, a meeting was held in Cork to arrange for a monument to Father Mathew, Colonel Beamish, the head of one of the leading distilleries, was in the chair.

Yet the Temperance crusade had hit these men hard. In the six years between 1839 and 1844 inclusive the duty paid on spirits distilled in Ireland had fallen by nearly one half.

To be sure Father Mathew met with violent opposition. Mr. Frank Mathew says, so delightfully that I cannot help but quote him:

"Indeed, one can feel a certain sympathy for one class of his opponents—some of the older country gentlemen, who looked with avowed enmity on his puritanical teetotal-

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ism. It had always seemed fitting to them that they should be assisted to bed drunk by servants who envied their condition, as their fathers had been assisted before them; but it was bitter to be carried to bed by supercilious teetotalers. Nowadays the very beggar at the cross-roads had an air of conscious virtue, and the gutter-children considered them hoary-headed reprobates.

“It was hard on men who had been always typical Irish gentlemen, honourable, hospitable, and kindly, always ready to fight or drink with any man, now to find their virtues cast in their teeth as faults by water-drinking, peaceful milksops, and their honour changed to blame; they felt they had fallen on evil days and on evil tongues.”

Nor was disinterestedness confined only to the upper classes of the world which depended on the consumption of drink for its prosperity. According to Father Mathew himself numbers of publicans joined his society and gave up their means of livelihood.

Father Mathew was not the man he was, fine of texture, soft of heart, loving of nature,

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without being sensitive to opposition and misrepresentation. There were times when he suffered acutely. He ought to have had a harder skin to do the work he did. But at least he had delightful consolations, for he turned as readily to graciousness and kindness as the flower to the sun. Be sure he had unbounded consolation from the great number of his converts, but, being an Irishman, with an Irishman's feeling for fine birth and breeding—the one aristocracy the Irishman does not acknowledge is the aristocracy of wealth), it was sweet to him when his work was acknowledged by the noble and the distinguished. Now it is the Marquis of Lansdowne who calls at the Little Friary in the Father's absence and interrogates a secretary minutely about the work and the Father's habits and customs. The secretary, having a moment of leisure, gossips freely with "the quiet-looking, neatly-dressed elderly gentleman": and is finally "knocked all of a heap" by the gentleman's presenting his card, to think how he had been entertaining so carelessly the great of the earth. The Marquis left for Father Mathew a letter in

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which he expressed in stilted, old-fashioned terms his admiration for the man and the work and enclosed a draft for a hundred pounds for Father Mathew to use as he thought fit.

Again he is being invited to visit the Duke of Devonshire, and winning his Grace's heart.

One or two descriptions of how Father Mathew looked at this time are interesting. Says the Russian traveller, Kohl, who happened to be in Ireland about 1840 and met Father Mathew:

“He is decidedly a man of a distinguished appearance, and I was not long in comprehending the influence which it was in his power to exercise over the people. The multitude require a handsome and imposing person in the individual who is to lead them, and Father Mathew is unquestionably handsome. He is not tall; he is about the same height and figure as Napoleon, and is, throughout, well built and well proportioned. He has nothing of the meagre, haggard Franciscan monk about him; but, on the contrary, without being exactly corpulent,

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his figure is well rounded and in excellent condition. His countenance is fresh and beaming with health. His movements and address are simple and unaffected, and altogether he has something about him that wins for him the goodwill of those he addresses. His features are regular, and full of noble expression, of mildness and indomitable firmness. His eyes are large, and he is apt to keep his glance fixed for a long time on the same object. His forehead is straight, high, and commanding, and his nose—a part of the face which in some expresses such intense vulgarity, and in others so much nobleness and delicacy—is particularly handsome, though somewhat too aquiline. His mouth is small and well proportioned, and his chin round, projecting, firm, and large, like Napoleon's."

And again Mrs. S. C. Hall records:

"The expression of his countenance is peculiarly mild and gracious. His manner is persuasive to a degree, simple, and easy and humble, without a shadow of affectation, and his voice is low and musical, such as moves men. A man more naturally fitted to

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obtain influence over a people easily led, and proverbially swayed by the affections, we have never encountered. No man has borne his honours more meekly, encountered opposition with greater gentleness or forbearance, or disarmed hostility by weapons better suited to a Christian."

The incident of how Father Mathew stopped Her Majesty's mails may be told here in Maguire's words:

"At this time the Great Southern and Western Railway of Ireland was scarcely hatched in the brain of its projector, and the 'mail' was the quickest mode of conveyance between the cities and chief towns of the country. The mail coach between Dublin and Cork, when coming from Dublin, stopped at Athy long enough to admit of the passengers breakfasting in the hotel of that town. On the day in question the coach stopped as usual; but one of the inside passengers having been recognized by the group then invariably awaiting the arrival and the departure of the 'mail,' a shout of joy was raised, that resounded through the quiet little town; and in a minute the cry

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‘ Father Mathew is at the hotel!’ was heard by almost every human being of the entire population. Soon a dense crowd assembled; and by the time the coach ought to have started, that vehicle was wedged round so completely, that to think of moving it one inch from the hotel door until Father Mathew had administered the pledge to those who now clamoured for it at his hands, was quite out of the question. Father Mathew had no desire to delay the coach, for to do so was, in fact, to stop the principal correspondence of the south of Ireland; but what could he do but endeavour to diminish the numbers by giving them the pledge and thus get rid of the obstruction? And he at once commenced to administer the pledge with more than ordinary expedition. But as fast as he got rid of one large batch, another much larger took its place—and all this time the crowd becoming more dense in consequence of frequent accessions from the surrounding country; so that it was not until after a delay of *five hours*, during which Father Mathew worked as he never worked before in his life, that the Royal Mail was well out

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of the town of Athy. The incident made considerable noise at the time, and some of the papers were very indignant with the 'friar' and his audacity in stopping Her Majesty's Mail and interrupting the correspondence of the country; and one journal went so far in its wrath as to suggest that he should not be suffered to travel by a similar conveyance again. The agent in Cork sent the article—it was from an English paper—to Mr. Purcell, the proprietor of the coaches and contractor for carrying the mails; and the reply which that gentleman made was to enclose to his agent a letter for Father Mathew, in which he assured the audacious stopper of Her Majesty's Mail that he would confer a favour on him, Peter Purcell, 'by making free use of all his coaches to further the holy cause of temperance.' This liberal offer, of which Father Mathew gratefully availed himself, was of considerable advantage to the latter, as the coaches of Mr. Purcell traversed the principal highways of the kingdom.

"The same privilege was granted by Mr. Bianconi, the well-known owner of the public

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cars of the country, and a warm personal friend of the Apostle of Temperance."

By the way, I must not omit from my cloud of witnesses William Makepeace Thackeray, who describes his meeting with Father Mathew in "The Irish Sketch-Book."

"On the day we arrived in Cork," Thackeray writes, "a stout, handsome, honest-looking man, of some two-and-forty years, was passing by, and received a number of bows from the crowd round. It was Theobald Mathew, with whose face a thousand little printshop windows had already rendered me familiar. He shook hands with the master of the carriage very cordially, and just as cordially with the master's coachman, a disciple of temperance, as at least half Ireland is at present. . . . The world likes to know how a great man appears, even to a *valet-de-chambre*, and I suppose it is one's vanity that is flattered to find the great man quite as unassuming as the very smallest personage present, and so like to other mortals that we would not know him to be a great man at all did we not know his name and what he had done. There is nothing

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remarkable in Mr. Mathew's manner, except that it is exceedingly simple, hearty, and manly, and that he does not wear the down-cast, demure look which, I know not why, certainly characterizes the chief part of the gentlemen of his profession.

“He is almost the only man, too, that I have met in Ireland who, in speaking of public affairs, did not speak as a partisan. With the state of the country, of landlord, tenant, and peasantry, he seemed to be most curiously and intimately acquainted, speaking of their wants, differences, and the means of bettering them with the minutest practical knowledge. And it was impossible in hearing him to know, but from previous acquaintance with his character, whether he was Whig or Tory, Catholic or Protestant. His knowledge of the people is prodigious, and their confidence in him as great; and what a touching attachment that is which these poor fellows show to any one who has their cause at heart, even to anyone who says he has.

“Avoiding all political questions, no man seems more eager than he for the practical

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improvement of this country. Leases and rents, farming improvements, reading societies, music societies—he was full of these, and of his schemes of temperance above all. He never misses a chance of making a convert, and has his hand ready and a pledge in his pocket for rich or poor.

“One of his disciples, in a livery coat, came into the room with a tray. Mr. Mathew recognized him, and shook him by the hand directly, and so he did with the strangers who were presented to him, and not with a courtly, popularity-hunting air, but, as it seemed, from sheer hearty kindness and a desire to do everyone good.”

CHAPTER VI

MEN OF THE NORTH AND OTHERS

IN 1841 Father Mathew carried the campaign into Ulster. He had been warned that he would be in danger in going there, and indeed no other Catholic priest could have so conquered the strongholds of Orangeism in the north of Ireland.

In a strain innocently jubilant—it was a part of his gracious character that he received kindness with such delight—he tells how widely different the reality was from the anticipation :

“We had no military, no police, no constables; but, in lieu of them, we had several excellent young gentlemen from Belfast, Lisburn, and other places, who kept order. I must here speak particularly of young Mr. Hancock, of Lurgan, whose efforts in the preservation of the peace, and in aid of the cause, were most laudable. I had the happiness of being the guest of his amiable

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mother whilst in Lurgan; and I had the honour also of being the guest of the noble proprietor, Lord Lurgan. Colonel Blacker there met me, and read to me a beautiful poetical tribute to the success of teetotalism, during the reading of which every eye in that gilded saloon beamed with pleasure. In coming originally to the north I had great difficulties to contend with. I was told I would be assassinated in Ulster; but I had confidence in my cause, as I came in the name of the Lord, proclaiming aloud: 'Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, to men of goodwill.' I knew the people of Ulster were too virtuous to refuse me their aid in this total abstinence movement on any sectarian grounds. I had also too much reliance on the honour of Irishmen to suppose the people of this province would arise in their might and crush one humble individual who was merely trying to promote public morality. In the words of the poet, slightly altered, I may say, in conclusion:

Blessed for ever the day I relied
On Ulster's honour and Ulster's pride."

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On a subsequent occasion he referred to his further experience of the kindness and good feeling almost universally manifested towards him by persons of the most opposite opinions, and showed how, by his tact and good nature, he converted into a compliment that which some few ill-conditioned or ill-mannered persons intended as an insult to the Popish Priest:

“When I was about visiting Cootehill, there was a great number of placards posted about the place cautioning me not to go there, as it was supposed the Protestants would not receive me kindly: and the Catholic Bishop wrote to me not to visit the place; yet I went there, and the first person who met me and who gave me the most cordial welcome was the Rev. Dr. Douglas, rector of Cootehill, together with all the respectable Protestants of the town. I discovered afterwards that the person who got the placards printed and posted up was no other than a Catholic publican of the town. I met some of my warmest friends from Armagh to Caledon, amongst whom were Messrs. Ellis, Moore, and many others,

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who, for the sake of good example and edification, took the pledge, in order to induce others to do the same; and I can tell them that from the time I went into Ulster to my last visit to Drogheda I have received the greatest kindness at the hands of all persons and parties. At Clones there were two Orange flags raised there when I visited it, and, instead of an insult, I thought this a very great compliment, never having seen one or been honoured with one before, and when I saw them I called for three cheers for the Orange flag, and the Catholics and Protestants became the greatest friends from that day forward, and during three days while I remained there the different parties were the best friends imaginable. I could have apprehended nothing save goodwill and kindly feeling from one end of Ulster to the other, and this was amply demonstrated by my visits to Lurgan, Lisburn, Belfast, Downpatrick, Derry, and other places; and the 'Prentice Boys' of Derry showed me the greatest kindness, but it was not to me alone, but to the glorious cause. Thousands of them came out to Moira

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from Belfast and other places, and actually detained me three days longer than I intended to have stopped; and was not this truly delightful?"

As A. M. Sullivan says truly: "A Catholic priest calling for a cordial salutation of the Orange banner and a Catholic assembly heartily responding, was something almost inconceivable. It had never occurred before in Ireland—I'm afraid it has never occurred since."

One recruit who knelt for his blessing said: "You wouldn't be blessing me if you knew what I was." "And what are you, my dear?" "I'm an Orangeman, your Reverence." "Why, God bless you, my dear, I wouldn't care if you were a lemon-man."

This visit to the North with its great success encouraged him to carry the crusade beyond the bounds of Ireland. His work by this time was being heard of and praised near and far. Channing bore witness as far away as Boston:

"At the present moment it is singularly unreasonable to doubt and despair of the improvement of society. A few years ago

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had we been called upon to name the country, of all others most degraded, beggared, and hopelessly crushed by intemperance, we should have selected Ireland. There men and women, young and old, were alike swept away by what seemed an irresistible torrent. Childhood was baptized into drunkenness; and now, in the short space of two or three years, this vice of ages has been almost rooted out. In the moral point of view the Ireland of the past is vanished; a new Ireland has started into life; five millions of her population have taken the pledge of total abstinence; and instances of violating the pledge are very, very rare. The excise on ardent spirits has been diminished nearly a million sterling.

“History records no revolution like this; it is the grand event of the present day. Father Mathew, the leader in this moral revolution, ranks far above the heroes and statesmen of all times.

“However, as Protestants, we may question the claims of departed saints, here is a living minister who, if he may be judged from one work, deserves to be canonized,

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and whose name should be placed in the calendar not far below Apostles."

And nearer home listen to Maria Edgeworth, Ireland's greatest novelist:

"In our village of Edgeworthstown the whisky-selling has diminished since the pledge has been taken so as to leave the public-houses empty. The appearance of the people, their quiet demeanour at markets and fairs, has wonderfully improved in general; and, to the knowledge of this family, many notorious drinkers, and some, as it was thought, confirmed drunkards, have been completely reformed by taking the pledge. Beyond all calculations, beyond all the predictions of experience, and all the examples from the past, and all analogy, this wonderful crusade against the bad habits of the nation, the bad habits and tastes of individuals, has succeeded and lasted.

"It is amazing, and proves the power of moral and religious influence beyond any other example on record in history. I consider Father Mathew as the greatest benefactor to this country; the most true friend to Irishmen and to Ireland."

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Invitations now continually poured in upon him from every part of Ireland. His activity was amazing, especially when one considers the slowness of locomotion in those days. One must remember that railways were only in their infancy and that his means of getting about was by the horsed mail-coaches. To give an idea of his quickness—on a certain day in October, 1841, he was in Newry, and two days afterwards he was administering the pledge in Tralee, having passed through Cork in the meanwhile. Again, after a successful visit to Limerick, he reached Cork on Friday, 8th July, 1842. He left Cork on Saturday and held a meeting near Bantry on Sunday: he returned to Cork on Tuesday, visited Tralee on Friday the 15th, held a meeting near Kenmare on Sunday, returned to Cork, where he remained till the 23rd, and on Sunday the 24th preached and administered the pledge at Castletown-Berehaven.

His visits were usually prayed for by his brother priests with a twofold intention, that he might administer the pledge, and preach as well in support of some good

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work, such as the erection of a new church or convent or school-house. To be sure he was carried by those generous coach-owners, Purcell and Bianconi, free all over Ireland. But wherever he went he spent money lavishly. He not only preached the charity sermon but he was the first and most generous of the contributors. "Give! give! give!" was still his motto. The local temperance society never appealed to him in vain for its reading-room or its band. It was extraordinary the number of these institutions he cleared of debt. And everywhere he went, wherever the coach stopped, he was surrounded by a crowd of the poor, the blind, the lame, the afflicted. He rained silver on such a crowd. It was not in him to see misery and not respond to its appeals.

He was no financier, and the mines of Golconda would hardly have been too great for his generosity to dispense. One might well ask where he found the money for these benefactions. Well, a good deal of money was given to him from time to time by friends and admirers. But beyond these aids Theobald Mathew beggared himself for the people.

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“The greatest of these is Charity,” was the precept which belonged to him.

It was only after his death that the full extent of his beneficence was known. Indeed in many cases the objects of the beneficence did not know from whence it came: and it is safe to say that a deal of Father Mathew’s charity was known only to himself and God.

His persuasiveness was extraordinary. Let me quote Maguire on this point.

“In his zeal for making ‘converts,’ no man ever surpassed Father Mathew. Neither age, nor sex, nor condition, was a protection against his seductive arts.” The venerable grandfather in his arm-chair, or the toddler drawing his “go-cart”—the master or the man, the mistress or the maid—the porter, the clerk, or the merchant—the policeman or the prisoner—the priest at the altar or the boy wearing the alb—the schoolmaster and the schoolmistress, or the scholar with the jacket or the scholar with the frock—the nurse in the hospital or the patients in the sick ward—the gentleman of wide estate, or the lodgekeeper at his gate—the editor of the newspaper or the “devil” besmirched

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with ink—the nobleman or the sweep—the fine lady or the street-scavenger—all were alike to Father Mathew, who never allowed slip an opportunity of adding a new follower to his standard.

“Did you see Father Mathew lately?” said one friend to another, whom he happened to meet travelling in the south of Ireland. “I did,” was the reply. “And I’ll engage he made you take the pledge?” “He did, indeed. But did you see him lately?” “To be sure I did.” “And did he make you take it too?” “That he did.” “There is no escaping him; but I am not sorry for it.” “No, nor I, neither.”

Many a young fellow, who had as much notion of taking the pledge as he had of jumping over the moon, was caught, snaffled, bound hand and foot, before he knew where he was. “My dear child, I know you wish to oblige me” would be murmured in the softest and most winning accents of the practised entrapper of unsuspecting youth. This was one of his most deadly hooks, and seldom failed in its effect. “Indeed I would, Father Mathew—you *know* that, sir,” the

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intended victim would incautiously reply. "Well, my dear, you would greatly oblige me if you would join our society, and give me the benefit of your influence." "But, Father Mathew, I assure you I have no occasion for it—I was never drunk in my life." "Of course you were not, my dear; and therefore it will be *no sacrifice to you*—you have nothing to give up as others have; and you will enjoy the consciousness of having afforded a good example to those who need it. My dear child, don't refuse me this favour." And before the victim could frame an excuse or murmur a remonstrance, he found himself on his knees, repeating the words of the pledge, and on rising up, he was a Mathewite, enrolled in the ranks of temperance, with a silver medal hanging round his neck—the same medal which his captor had worn a moment before. Meet him in a coach or train; meet him in the street; visit him, or be visited by him; it was all the same—there was no escape, even for those who, to use their own words, "did not require the pledge," or "had no occasion for it." In flight alone was there protection

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from the wiles of one who was as well versed in the arts of the recruiting sergeant as in the duties and responsibilities of chief and leader. Numbers of innocent boys and girls gladly did as he required of them, for the enjoyment of a holiday or the possession of a picture-book or a doll; and if it were said that there was not much value in converts of this class, Father Mathew would reply, "I prefer them to all others. Besides, they will be men and women one of these days. It is on the youth of the country I place my chief dependence." And thousands of silver medals, and hundreds of thousands of the ordinary medals, did these young teetotalers cost him who valued their accession so highly.

His only acrimony was for those who, having put their hands to the plough, were minded to look backward. There was the Cork gentleman who came pleading that lemonade disagreed with his stomach and that his health required one glass of punch a day. Father Mathew argued, pleaded, prayed—finally burst into a towering rage with the recusant. "Go, then," he said, "go, and drink a bucketful of it."

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Everything else he could forgive—and he had a deal to forgive, for he fared no better than others who have devoted themselves to the service of mankind: the one thing he could not forgive was giving up the pledge. Maguire tells of his having a tough tussle with a peasant who came to deliver up his card and medal—finally finding his doggedness beyond any persuasion, taking him by the shoulders and thrusting him out into the street.

Here is an amusing picture of the struggles of some would-be recusants.

“There might sometimes be seen a flying pledge-breaker, pursued by one of the clerks or by a volunteer, rushing down Drinan Street—which was immediately opposite the well-known dwelling in Cove Street—or down Cove Street, and Father Mathew watching the chase from the window or the street door. It occasionally happened that a head was popped inside the parlour door, and that a clink of some hard substance on the floor followed the words—‘there ’tis for ye—I’m done with it anyhow’; and a rush towards the street door would bear witness

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to the fact that an audacious deserter was about escaping, having, as it were, flung down his firelock before the face of his commander. Away the brave Donnelly would rush in pursuit, aided, perhaps, by some sturdy son of temperance who happened to be in the parlour at the time; and if the culprit was overtaken and captured, and Father Mathew in the way, speedy repentance and prompt pardon were the result; but it as frequently occurred that the plan of escape had been too well matured, and that means had been taken to baffle pursuit and prevent the possibility of capture. There was also a more simple and less perilous mode of giving up the pledge, which was largely availed of. This was by slipping the card or the medal under the hall door, or into the letter-box, or even sending it through the post-office; and to this safer mode of abandoning the cause, and 'taking to strong drink,' the dread of meeting Father Mathew and encountering his anger induced many to have recourse. But when, wretched and woe-begone, with tattered clothes and pale faces, the deserters returned after a week's

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debauch, there was no anger to dread—they knew that compassion and tenderness were always awaiting the poor penitent prodigal. Truly, there was more joy in that parlour at the return of one drunkard than at the enrollment of ninety-nine sober who had never fallen.”

It was no doubt the excessive fatigue, the constant travelling under all sorts of conditions, the standing for hours at a time administering the pledge—there were days when he stood for six hours—that undermined his splendid constitution. Everywhere the desire of the people to see him, to touch him, to have speech with him, was overwhelming. Many times he had to repudiate any miraculous power in his blessing to effect cures. One thing he could not prevent the people from believing, and that was that his administration of the pledge carried with it a miraculous power of resisting temptation: and this, inevitable with an imaginative people like the Irish, was doubtless a potent factor in the overwhelming tide of his success.

CHAPTER VII

FATHER MATHEW AND O'CONNELL

IN 1840 O'Connell had started his Repeal Movement, the movement for the repeal of the legislative union between Ireland and Great Britain which he had foreshadowed in his speeches for many years. The year 1842 saw the founding of the *Nation*, which was to bring a new soul into Ireland, and, by founding the Young Ireland party, to raise politics to ideal heights. The Young Irelanders were to supersede O'Connell in time, but for the moment the great Tribune of the people was irresistible. Against his rich, glowing, perfervid, exaggerated personality who could at that time have set a handful of poetry-writing young men in a Dublin newspaper office?

Repeal swept the country like a whirlwind. The Catholic Celts were to a man Repealers, and wore the Repeal button.

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Vast meetings were held all over the country. The new movement, which had been talked about for so many years that men had come scarcely to believe in its coming, sprang to birth, full-grown in a single night.

In a manner of speaking the Temperance Movement helped and prepared the way for the Repeal Movement. There were nearly eight million people in the country. They had been learning from the Temperance movement lessons of self-government and self-control. There was little danger now of the people being turned aside from the thing they wanted by the desire for drink, as had happened before in the heroic, hopeless peasant risings, when the deeds of giants and heroes were nullified and made vain by the need of yielding to an overwhelming thirst.

Father Mathew was in full sympathy with everything that promised to better the condition of his country: but he was no politician. Indeed, reading his life, one always feels that he was strongly conservative by nature. He never forgot that he was a gentleman born, one of the Mathews of Thomas-

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town, a representative of law and order, and by nature opposed to violent upheavals and reversions of the proper order of precedence.

O'Connell grasped at the immense Temperance organization, meaning to make it part of his own movement. It was a danger Father Mathew would seem to have foreseen, and against which he guarded the organization, which was to embrace men of all politics as well as of all creeds, as long as he could.

Says Mr. Frank Mathew:

“He and O'Connell drew the bulk of their followers from the same class. O'Connell himself was a teetotaler; but he was a repealer first and a teetotaler afterwards. He was as eager to join the repeal and temperance movements as the priest was to keep them apart. He publicly announced that he intended to join the great annual temperance procession to be held in Cork on Easter Monday, 1842. This was unwelcome news to Father Mathew; he was rather sore on the subject; he could not help suspecting that O'Connell's zeal was not unselfish, and that it aimed at a public alliance of the movements. However, he could do nothing.

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“O’Connell was received enthusiastically ; he and the priest walked side by side at the head of the procession. The two leaders formed a striking contrast. O’Connell wore his gold chain, as Lord Mayor of Dublin, and his grand rugged head and great shoulders towered over the priest, who was in his usual prim old-fashioned dress. It was said that ten thousand teetotalers walked in the procession ; and at the end of it O’Connell knelt down for the priest’s blessing.

“Father Mathew’s fears were realized. Of course, the rank and file of his followers were delighted to see the two leaders walking shoulder to shoulder. Outsiders would not believe that this public alliance was purely political, and it did much to rouse a political and sectarian feeling against his movement.”

That the mischief had already begun is shown by this extract from a letter written in the same month of the Easter procession by Father Mathew to Richard Allen of Dublin, one of the noble band of Quakers who were by his side in the Temperance Movement.

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“There are difficulties which cause me more pain than the assertion of Sir Robert Peel—the insidious efforts to give to our society a political colouring, and to invoke a gloomy fanatic cry against us. The great body of teetotallers, it is true, is composed of Roman Catholics; but that is from the great bulk of the people being Roman Catholics, and not from anything exclusive in our society. A hostile disposition has been excited on this account in certain localities; and I must also complain, with the deepest sorrow, that many who, from rank and station, possess great influence, have not, to use the mildest term, exercised it in favour of our society. I utterly disclaim any political object; my ardent desire is to promote the glory of God by drying up the fruitful source of crime, and the happiness of His creatures by persuading them to the observation of temperance.”

He was indeed a constant fighter all his life against crime: and he denounced Ribbonism and the secret societies of his day vigorously. In 1842 there was one of the periodic outbursts of agrarian crime, and

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Father Mathew, going up and down the country, was vehement in condemnation. He can hardly have been *persona grata* with the Ribbonmen and the other secret societies.

In Tipperary he said: "I have seen with the deepest regret that it has been imputed to the district of Newport that secret societies exist there. This I am afflicted to hear, that any district where the temperance cause has been established could harbour such societies. I have always earnestly, perseveringly, emphatically cautioned the people against these societies; because they are filled with danger, with vice, with iniquity; because they cut at the roots of social order; because they are the blight and the bane of social happiness."

Denouncing two agrarian murders, he said: "The perpetrators of these red-handed murders cannot escape the just wrath of God. Though the brand of Cain on their brow may not be apparent to the eyes of mortals, to the eyes of the Eternal it is as plain as the sun at noonday is to us. The eye of Heaven pierces through every gloom and marks out

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the wretch who has shed his brother's blood, who, with impious hands, has taken away the life of a fellow-creature.

“Crimes such as these bring a curse on the land. Oh! in the name of God, hold fast to the temperance pledge, and shun as you would the plague the company of those who seek to entrap you into secret and illegal associations, the authors of every wretchedness.”

He used to say that the “disturbed districts” were those in which there happened to be at the same time a hated landlord and a ringleader of mischief. The unpopular landlords were not necessarily the worst. He hoped by making the people sober to break the power of the ringleaders.

The young men of the *Nation* had a fervent admiration for Father Mathew, and some of them—Gavan Duffy among them—were his personal friends. Thomas Davis, the soul of the Young Ireland party, writing to Walter Savage Landor about this time, says:

“If you knew Mr. Mathew you would relish his simple and downright manners.

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He is joyous, friendly, and quite unassuming. To have taken away a degrading and impoverishing vice from the hearts and habits of three millions of people in a couple of years seems to justify any praise to Mr. Mathew, and also to justify much hope for the people."

By the way, some little account of these young men of the *Nation* must be given for readers who are not acquainted with Irish affairs. The *Nation* newspaper was founded by a group of young men many and variously gifted, whose desire and intention was to bring a new soul into Ireland. They wanted to win Ireland's freedom, but they wanted to win it clean-handed.

For righteous men must make our land
A Nation once again,

sang John O'Hagan, one of the band, who was to die as Chief of the Land Commissioners in Ireland. Davis was the leading spirit of them. He was a Protestant, a Trinity College man, a gentleman by birth. He was a born leader of men, a man of the gentlest and noblest ideals. He would have been a poet if he had not made his poetry the

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handmaid of revolution, whereby he has left a deal of ringing National verse which he flung out red-hot with unbelievable facility. He had the art of winning men's hearts to a surprising extent. Also there was John Mitchel, a dour man of the North, a writer of splendid prose, a passionate, strong man, oddly unlike his fellows. There was John Martin, his brother-in-law, a man of ideal virtues. There was James Clarence Mangan, the poet, the author of one or two immortal things. His "Dark Rosaleen" must live as long as poetry.

Over dew, over sands
Shall I fly for your weal.
Your holy, delicate white hands
Shall girdle me with steel.
At home in your emerald bowers
From morning's dawn till e'en
You'll pray for me through daylight's hours,
My dark Rosaleen.
You'll pray for me through daylight's hours,
My queen, my saint, my flower of flowers,
My dark Rosaleen.

I could scale the blue air,
I could plough the high hills,
Oh, I could kneel all night in prayer
To heal your many ills.

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And one beamy smile from you
Would float like light between
My toils and me, my own, my true,
My dark Rosaleen,
Could give me life and soul anew,
A second life, a soul anew,
My dark Rosaleen.

O, the Erne shall run red
With redundance of blood,
The earth shall rock beneath our tread
And flames wrap hill and wood.
And gun-peal and slogan-cry
Wake many a glen serene
Ere you shall faint, ere you shall die,
My dark Rosaleen.
The Judgment Hour must first be nigh
Ere you can faint, ere you can die,
My dark Rosaleen!

Then there was Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, a man of affairs, who was to become a Colonial Premier, with a knighthood conferred by the Queen. He was the author of some splendidly ringing ballads. There was D'Arcy Magee, also a poet, who was a Minister of the Crown when he was assassinated in Canada many years later. There were orators, fervid prose writers. All of them who lived long enough achieved much distinction. There were unofficial sym-

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pathizers like Sir Samuel Ferguson, one of the most considerable poets Ireland has produced: there was John Kells Ingram, who wrote "Who Fears to Speak of '98?" the Irish National Anthem. There were Walsh and Doheny, the writers of exquisitely simple poems. It was, in fact, a galaxy of the talents.

William Smith O'Brien, the brother of Lord Inchiquin, who was to be the militant leader of the Irish rising in '48, a Protestant, also wrote of Father Mathew:

"For myself, whether Father Mathew be or be not canonized as a saint by the Church of Rome, I am disposed to regard him as an apostle, who was specially deputed on a Divine mission by the Almighty, and invested with power almost miraculous. To none of the ordinary operations of human agency can I ascribe the success which attended his efforts to repress one of the besetting sins of the Irish nation.

"If I had read in history that such success had attended the labours of an unpretending priest, whose chief characteristic was modest simplicity of demeanour, I own that I should

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have distrusted the narrative as an exaggeration; but we have been all of us witnesses to the fact that myriads simultaneously obeyed his advice, and at his bidding abandoned a favourite indulgence."

O'Connell took his cue from the *Nation*. His cry in the Repeal agitation was, "Repeal! Won peacefully, if possible: if not, we are ready to fight for it." Sir Robert Peel had said in the House of Commons that he preferred civil war to Repeal. O'Connell answered: "I belong to a nation of eight millions, and there is besides a million of Irishmen in England. If Sir Robert Peel has the audacity to cause a contest between the two countries we will put him in the wrong. We will begin no rebellion, but I tell him from this place that he dare not begin the strife against Ireland."

In America and on the Continent there was a strong public opinion behind O'Connell. Macaulay warned the ministry: "In a contest with Ireland you will not have out of this island a single well-wisher in the world."

One of Father Mathew's reasons for desir-

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ing to keep his movement apart from the Repeal Movement was the feeling that if the two were made identical the Temperance Movement would not survive the other, which was bound to come to an end either by the granting of Repeal or by O'Connell's failing health, for the Liberator was now well advanced in years.

Mr. Frank Mathew makes a telling contrast between the methods of O'Connell and the methods of Father Mathew:

“O'Connell had no thought of really rebelling; he was certain that if he could gather a sufficient following of men ready to fight the Ministry would give way rather than begin a civil war. The peasants believed his rhetoric; they caught up his warlike phrases with such enthusiasm, that to keep in touch with them he was forced forward, forced to use even plainer threats.

He made a point of always giving his hearers unstinted praise; they were “the finest peasantry in the world”; their country was the loveliest—“the land of the green valley and the rushing river.” Father Mathew often gave them straightforward rebukes; he

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told them their wretched state was caused not only by English misrule, but also by their own folly, their own drunkenness, quarrelsomeness, idleness, and unthriftiness. Their worst faults were caused by their drunkenness; this was the head and front of their offending. Let them forswear drink, the other faults would soon disappear."

The meetings at Tara, at Mullaghmast, at Cashel were enormous. It was part of O'Connell's gift for stage-management that he selected such spots, memorable in Irish history, as his meeting-places. At Tara the numbers were computed at anything between half a million and a million people. It could only have been possible to bring together such a multitude and disperse them without harm in a country of teetotalers. Gavan Duffy tells how three men found loitering on the outskirts of the great meeting confessed shamefacedly that they were prevented by the local contingent of Repealers from marching with them because they had broken the pledge.

It was in fact quite impossible to keep

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the two movements apart. The Temperance organization, with its bands and reading-rooms, was ready-made to the hand of O'Connell. Willy-nilly, the Temperance Movement went Repeal, despite the forebodings of its founder, who had little sympathy with O'Connell's sharpening a sword of rebellion which was only meant to flash in the eyes of England. The people were taking O'Connell at his word. The pretence of rebellion was likely to prove a grim reality. And the man who was first of all a lover of peace, the movement he had created the end of which was peace, were weapons to the hand of the Prince of agitators.

CHAPTER VIII

JOYS AND GRIEFS

IN August, 1842, he had begun the work outside Ireland by a visit to Glasgow, where he was received with almost as much enthusiasm as though it were Ireland. To be sure there were a good many exiles of Erin among the crowds that thronged about him, eager to touch him, and see him, and take the pledge from him. He administered the pledge to thousands, ten to twelve thousand in one day, during which he stood for eight hours, according to the *Argus*, a Glasgow paper. He preached when he was not administering the pledge, and one day there was a great procession and banquet in his honour. Characteristically, on that procession day, he slipped away out of the carriage which had contained him, and was discovered in the Cattle Market administering the pledge to the pilgrims from Edinburgh who had to return the same day.

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A most interesting testimony to the abiding value of his work was given by a Scottish Presbyterian clergyman six years later in the *Scottish Temperance Review*.

“When distributing tracts after this on the Sabbath, among the prisoners, we seldom met with a person from Ireland, either charged with intemperance or theft. But the result of the good man’s labours was still more visibly seen in the lower parts of the city. In the district we visited, for example, as a city missionary, there was a close off High Street, which contained about eighty families, the majority of whom were Catholics. The people were so uproarious that they almost required a policeman constantly amongst them. On a Wednesday morning, however, most of the adults, and a number of the juveniles, set off in a body to the Cattle Market, and took the pledge from Father Mathew. From that day till May, 1845, when we left the district, there was not a quieter close, considering the number of inhabitants, in the city. A number are still adhering to the pledge, and their orderly demeanour is an agreeable contrast

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to several of their tippling Protestant neighbours."

Soon he was back again in Cork where he was received with a passion of enthusiasm, the usual grand procession to meet him, the usual addresses of welcome from his faithful teetotalers. An eye-witness tells us something of the doings of that day:

"Short as was the notice afforded for preparation, the spectacle was really magnificent, not from decorations or trappings, but from the mighty masses who poured forth at an early hour from the city, towards the appointed place of meeting the Apostle, and hailing him on his triumphant return from Scotland. The day was exceedingly beautiful, the air cooled by a gentle breeze, and the whole face of nature brightened under a glowing sun that shone upon many a rich garden, and many a field of golden wheat ripe for the sickle of the reaper. Every face looked happy, and every step was buoyant, as young and old, men and women, parents and children, cheered on by the strains of numberless bands, advanced to meet their best friend and benefactor. The

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road was literally alive with gay groups, with bands and banners, with carriages, jingles, low cars laden with well-dressed females, and with vehicles of every possible description. The members of the different temperance rooms wore either scarfs, sashes, or rosettes, together with their medals, and nearly all bore wands decorated with white or pink ribbons. Mostly all the bands were dressed in uniform, some remarkable for richness, others for lightness and exceeding taste; and many, especially those who received the advantage of good instruction, played the finest pieces of music in a manner which clearly evidenced the vast intellectual capability of the humble and hitherto most neglected classes of the Irish people. But their gaiety, their good temper, and their excellent conduct were by far more delightful to behold. Long before the arrival of the Limerick mail at the appointed place, the different societies, headed by their bands, were formed into line of procession, and also the private and hired carriages, the cars and other vehicles. As the time drew near the excitement became intense; and a stranger

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hearing the eager and longing exclamations of the multitude, and seeing them rushing forward to catch one glimpse of the Apostle, would be inclined either to think Father Mathew was returning after an absence of years instead of days, or that he was one upon whose features and person they had never looked before. At length, from man to man the cry was passed—‘He is coming!—he is coming!’ And then there arose one wild outburst of feeling, one prolonged shout of joy, as the coach drove up, and, passing through a living lane of human beings, stopped at the usual place for changing horses for the last stage. Again and again did the heavens echo with the shout, as the Apostle descended from the coach, and, escorted by a number of gentlemen, entered the carriage of his Worship the Mayor. Mr. Mathew looked fresh, healthy, and untired as ever, and as if he had never encountered the wonderful fatigues to which his mission of charity and love so constantly exposed him. No sooner did the Mayor receive him into his carriage, than the people pressed forward with eagerness to see him,

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to touch him, or to hear his voice. The bands struck up with great spirit, and again the multitude sent up their cry of welcome to the moral emancipator of their country. After a few moments spent in necessary arrangement, the word to march was given, and gradually the several societies, with bands playing and banners waving, filed past the carriage in which stood the hero of the day."

No wonder that Father Mathew was happy, being the source and centre of so much love, he, the most loving and lovable of human beings. Reading of all these fine doings one is reminded sadly of John Wesley's thought when he visited the Earl and Countess of Moira at their house on Usher's Island, Dublin, and sat in the famous room which was lined with mother-o'-pearl, surrounded by many precious and beautiful things. "Alas," he wrote, "that all this must vanish like a dream!" as though he had foreknowledge of the day when no Moiras should be, and their beautiful house, mutilated and despoiled, should be made into the most dreary of charitable institutions.

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How little one could have thought, that August day in Cork, of what a few years should bring to this people, transported out of themselves by freedom from a degrading bondage and love for the man who had struck off their chains! Alas, that all this must vanish like a dream! For there was a cloud on the horizon no bigger than a man's hand which presently should spread and darken all the country. But who, on that August day, thought of famine and fever? No one: and least of all the "strangely happy" hero of the hour.

After Glasgow he had one of those happy holidays at Rathcloheen of which Maguire gives us so delightful a glimpse, when the eternal boy in the man who was a hero to all the world enjoyed himself for a few happy days away from the scenes of his labours.

"For these three or four days his eldest brother John's house at Rathcloheen was his head-quarters; and the announcement of his arrival was the signal for gladness and feasting to his nephews and nieces, the children of his brothers and his sister. Nor was Father Mathew forgetful of the commissariat,

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as many a hamper and parcel, jar and box, amply testified. The dining-room at Rathcloheen was spacious enough to accommodate the whole of the Clan Mathew, who presented a formidable number, as some five-and-twenty of the seniors sat round the great table, and some fifteen or more of the juniors were disposed of at the side table. Father Mathew's orders were that *all* should be summoned to the feast; and all, save the infant in arms, were accordingly present. Good conduct, and capacity for managing a spoon with decent independence—these were the only conditions necessary for admission to one of those grand family banquets, at which the Priest presided, as the acknowledged and honoured head. And, for the time, there did not breathe a happier man than the giver of the feast, as he sat at the head of that well-provided board, and saw round him those whom he loved most on earth, and in whose every glance he met reciprocal affection; or as he listened to the innocent prattle and the gay laughter of the merry occupants of the side table. In that delightful spectacle, in those joyous sounds,

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he lived over again the days of his boyhood; and the ever-present image of his mother—his good and gentle and holy mother—rose more vividly upon his memory, filling his eyes with tears, but tears of chastened happiness. From his burdened shoulders and his wearied spirit he flung his heavy responsibility and his grievous anxieties, and for these few brief days his spirits were the spirits of a boy. He played with the young people, entered eagerly into their sports, ran with them, romped with them, and promoted all kinds of novel and enchanting games.

“The children were enthusiastic followers of their ‘Reverend Uncle,’ as they termed him, and cherished their silver medals with commendable pride. But it was not at all certain that the same enthusiasm was felt in the cause by some of the elder members of the family; still, while the Priest was in Tipperary, water was the only beverage that sparkled in the glasses on the dinner-tables of his brothers.”

In February, 1843, Father Mathew wrote to a friend in America: “I have now with

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the Divine assistance hoisted the banner of Temperance in almost every parish in Ireland." Invitations to visit England had been pouring in constantly for some years: in the summer of 1843 he found himself able to comply with these pressing requests.

But before this came about there had been a movement in Ireland to present Father Mathew with a national testimonial, and a great meeting was held in the Theatre Royal, Dublin, on the 26th of January, 1843. The requisition for the meeting was signed by two Dukes, four Marquises, nineteen Earls, ten Viscounts and Barons, to say nothing of Bishops, Baronets, Members of Parliament, County Magistrates, and in fact the whole landed gentry. Among the speakers were the Duke of Leinster, who was in the chair, the Marquis of Headfort, the Marquis of Clanricarde, William Smith O'Brien, and Daniel O'Connell. All the rank and wealth and fashion of Dublin looked on from the boxes and balcony at the glittering meeting; and the compliments lavished upon Father Mathew and his work would have been enough to turn the head of anyone less used

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to adulation. O'Connell's speech wound up with characteristic floweriness:

"There is no painting the rainbow, the ray that comes from the sun, or the angelic plumes that flutter round the throne of the Deity: and there is no angel more pure and worthy than the angel of public morality, dignified in the name of Father Mathew."

Other times, other manners! One can imagine Father Mathew smiling over this strange panegyric. But it is sad to record that the Apostle of Temperance seems to have been very little benefited by this parade of Peers and Landed Gentry, to say nothing of Lords Spiritual, beyond the lavish compliments showered upon him. Maguire is suspiciously silent as to what form the great testimonial took.

Money would have been very welcome to Father Mathew, who could teach the Irish one virtue they needed, but could not teach them another, Thrift, which perhaps would have seemed to him hardly a virtue at all. To be sure he spent nothing, or next to nothing, on himself. But he never could hold his hands when it was a question of giving to others.

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It is delightful to read of a great Temperance tea-party given in his honour at Cork. Seventeen hundred people sat down to tea and "trimmings," and there were the usual speeches and enthusiasm. But when the accounts came to be settled, it was found that the receipts were less than the expenditure by a hundred pounds. One evening, while the Committee sat somewhat ruefully in council over this unpleasant fact, in walked Father Mathew, and—*plumped down the hundred pounds himself*. Only a person accustomed to the Irish ways could find this situation anything but comical. To one who knows Ireland it is not at all bewildering or funny. And Father Mathew was in himself an epitome of Irish ways of feeling and doing.

Before he could take up the English mission his brother Frank died, and for a time he was unable to do anything. Priest as he was, or perhaps the more that he was a priest, his big heart held in the utmost tenderness those boys and girls who had been children with him, fostered by the same tender love, in the old days at Thomastown and

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Rathcloheen. At each succeeding death in his family his soft heart bled and suffered. There were times when he would leave all the great business behind and steal away quietly to the graves of his own people, to weep and pray there, coming away consoled because he had placed his grief and his love in the bosom of God.

We hear nothing of the time or place of his mother's death, nor of the grief it caused him: and that omission is perhaps significant. His biographer may have felt that there are griefs, like St. Augustine's, to be kept secret and sacred:

“And then nevertheless I remembered what Thy handmaid was used to be: her walk with Thee how holy and good it was: how patient and long-suffering with me. And that it was all gone away from me now. And I wept over her and for her: over myself and for myself. And I let go my Tears which I had kept in before, making a Bed of them as it were for my Heart and I rested upon them. Because these were for Thine ears only, and not for any man.”

CHAPTER IX

THE CITY OF DREADFUL NIGHT

WHEN it was known that Father Mathew was about to visit England invitations rained on him, public and private. Among the latter was a pressing invitation from Earl Stanhope to visit him at his country-house, Chevening, near Sevenoaks. Everyone who was a lover of his kind was by this time enrolled among Father Mathew's warmest admirers. "Your presence in this country will afford me the greatest happiness," Lord Stanhope wrote, with a pleasing simplicity, "as I entertain for you the sincerest veneration, and have long and ardently wished for an opportunity of conversing with you, when you will find me most anxious to profit by your instructions. But I am only a very humble follower in the cause."

On the 30th of June, 1843, he left Cork

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for Liverpool, and, beginning his campaign there, carried it through Manchester, Salford, Huddersfield, Wakefield, Leeds, and the other great Northern towns. The story of all this is but a repetition of what happened at Glasgow. Enormous and enthusiastic meetings, great outbursts of popular feeling, tens of thousands enrolled in the Temperance cause, many sermons and lectures attended by people of all classes and creeds, even when they were delivered in Catholic churches. For bigotry seemed to fall down before Theobald Mathew, and all the creeds were united to reverence and honour him as few men ever have been revered and honoured in the history of the world.

Everywhere he went the fruits of his mission showed themselves by a lessening of crime, by an increased prosperity and happiness in the homes of the people, by a greater diligence on the part of the workers, by the quietness and order of the streets.

A good many kind people besides Lord Stanhope would fain have been Father Mathew's hosts; but the acceptance of private hospitality was a thing upon which he

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did not dare to embark. He wished to be accessible at all hours to those who desired to see him.

Maguire tells an amusing story of the device of a good Quaker of Wakefield to get Father Mathew as his guest, in spite of his determination to stay only in hotels:

“The Quaker invited him to stay at his house, and he received the usual reply, that he was to stay at the hotel for the convenience of those who required to see him at all hours. The Friend would not be put off, but intimated that his house was a hotel, whereon Father Mathew gladly consented to ‘put up’ at it while in Wakefield. A board with the word ‘Hotel’ was placed on the outside of the mansion, and the private residence became, for the time, a most comfortable inn. Father Mathew was greatly pleased with the quiet and order, the wonderful neatness and simple elegance that pervaded the entire establishment; while the agreeable manners of its master, which combined the cordiality of a friend with the politeness of the most gentlemanly host, filled him with astonishment. The servants

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of the house were also different from the usual class to be found in ordinary hotels; they were kindly, attentive, and respectful; and though they seemed to anticipate his every wish, they were neither fussy nor obtrusive. Then the bells of this Quaker hotel were singularly quiet; so that the 'boots,' and the chambermaids, and the waiters must have known by intuition when and where their services were required. Truly, it was a model establishment, which a visitor might leave with natural regret. The kindly device was not discovered until the time of departure drew near, when the master of the house, no longer fearing the abrupt departure of his guest, appeared in his true character—as a generous and thoughtful host."

Finally he arrived in London, where the great world as well as the little world was eagerly expecting him. It was characteristic of Father Mathew's work and the man that, though he might arrive like the conquering hero, with bands and banners, he would settle down immediately with what quietness he could snatch to the ordinary duties of the

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missionary priest. In London he began his work among the poor Irish of the East End. His routine was something like this. Rising early he would celebrate Mass in one of the churches, after which he would be occupied with the poor till it was time for one of the fashionable breakfasts to which he was invited day after day. Breaking his fast among the fine folk he would scurry away from them as soon as might be to the place that had been selected for his pledge-giving that day. And there he remained as long as there was anyone to be pledged. Returning to his hotel there were crowds of visitors to be received, people anxious to be seen on one pretext or another, letters to be written: a thousand and one things to be done before he was free to hurry away to the dinner table of some aristocratic host in Mayfair, for Father Mathew was the lion of the London season, and it was not in him, gracious as he was, to hold people at arm's length because they happened to be well born. Usually he would have been fasting all day from that early breakfast, and standing through the intervening hours, so, as we can well imagine, the poor lion must

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often have arrived in a somewhat exhausted condition, and more than ready for the excellent fare which meant so little to those accustomed to fine cookery and fine food every day of their lives. By ten o'clock he always slipped away from the dinner table, and was back as fast as might be to his Temperance Hotel, where he had to recite his Office before he slept. Surely in such a life there was no room for Satan's mischief.

At Lord Clanricarde's house he astonished the guests by shaking hands heartily with a footman who had taken the pledge from him, and one wonders whether the footman or the fine folk were the more amazed.

One of his social conquests was the Duke of Wellington. "I ought to claim your Grace as one of ours," he said ingratiatingly. "How is that, Mr. Mathew, since I am not a teetotaler?" "Well, your Grace must be a Temperance man, or you would never have kept your head cool enough to win the Battle of Waterloo."

With such innocent touches of blarney one can imagine him delighting the fine folk.

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The Iron Duke did not forget Father Mathew. Later on we find Father Mathew asking the discharge of a young soldier who had enlisted in a moment of madness, and the Duke answering: "Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington presents his compliments to Mr. Mathew. He could not refuse his application, and has directed the discharge of the soldier he desired."

His sense of humour often carried him where his serious and passionate pleading would have gone unheard. Maguire tells us:

"He created no small amusement to a large party at the hospitable mansion of an Irish nobleman by his attempts, partly playful, but also partly serious, to make a convert of Lord Brougham, who resisted, good-humouredly but resolutely, the efforts of his dangerous neighbour. 'I drink very little wine,' said Lord Brougham: 'only half a glass at luncheon, and two half glasses at dinner; and though my medical advisers told me I should increase the quantity, I refused to do so.' 'They were wrong, my lord, for advising you to increase the quantity, and

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you are wrong in taking the small quantity you do; but I have my hopes of you.' And so, after a pleasant resistance on the part of the learned lord, Father Mathew invested his lordship with the silver medal and ribbon, the insignia and collar of the new Order of the Bath. 'Then I will keep it,' said Lord Brougham, 'and take it to the House, where I shall be sure to meet old Lord — the worse for liquor, and I will put it on him.' The announcement of this intention was received with much laughter, for the noble lord referred to was notorious as a persistent worshipper of Bacchus. Lord Brougham was as good as his word; for, on meeting the veteran peer who was so celebrated for his potations, he said, 'Lord —, I have a present from Father Mathew for you,' and passed the ribbon rapidly over his neck. 'Then I tell you what it is, Brougham; by —! I will keep sober for this night,' said his lordship, who kept this vow, to the great amazement of his friends.

The *Times* of 3rd August, 1843, describes one of his meetings:

"During the whole day Father Mathew

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neither tasted food nor drank anything, and he was hard at work talking and administering the pledge the whole of the time. His speeches were temperate, and imbued with kindly feeling; and he took great pains to convince his hearers that he did not wish to advance the interest of any particular party, either in religion or politics, and declared that the Protestants of Ireland had received him with the same cordiality as the members of his own Church. Father Mathew has won golden opinions from all men by his affability and simple manner, and is an example in his own person that cheerfulness and good-humour can be reconciled with total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks.

“After giving the pledge to the second batch, Father Mathew said that while he was below he had heard one person say to his neighbour, ‘what a shame it was that a Protestant should receive a blessing from a Catholic priest.’ Now, since he had been in England he had everywhere received the blessings of the Protestants, and he was proud of it. If a blessing could do them no good, surely it could do them no harm.

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Since he had been in this country he had got half a million of blessings from the Protestants. He was daily saluted with 'God bless you, Father Mathew!' and such-like expressions. There certainly could be no evil in a blessing, come from whom it would."

Still his course was not always plain sailing. Some of his meetings were broken up by persons interested in the drink traffic, whose methods proved what a menace to them his mission was. *The Morning Chronicle* describes one of these counter-blasts, which, as Mr. Frank Mathew well says, ought to have the pencil of Cruikshank to describe it.

"A body of anti-teetotalers made their appearance in procession. They were about sixty or seventy in number, followed by about three times the number of boys. Some of them had staves, and were decorated from head to foot with hop leaves. Each of them bore a quart or pint pot in his hand, and in the centre the men carried large cans containing each at least four or five gallons of beer. They were forcing their way to the hustings, evidently with the determination

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to take possession of it, when they were met by the police. A free fight ensued, and much beer was shed. Finally, on the arrival of more police, the cockney bacchanals were routed, and retired, using the most gross language."

The riots had one good result, as many of the poorer Irish were attracted to the meetings by the hopes of a fight. Their prowess for Faith and Fatherland soon ended the opposition.

Carlyle had by chance been present at one of Father Mathew's meetings in Liverpool, and bore testimony with an emotion he did not often show to what he had seen.

"Passing near some Catholic chapel," writes Carlyle, "and noticing a crowd in a yard there with flags, white sticks, and brass bands, we stopped our hackney coachman, stepped forth into the thing, and found it to be Father Mathew distributing the temperance pledge to the lost sheep of the place, thousands strong of both sexes; a very ragged and lost-looking squadron indeed. Father Mathew is a broad, solid-looking man, with grey hair, mild, intelli-

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gent eyes, massive, rather aquiline nose and countenance. The very face of him attracts you. We saw him go through a whole act of the business, do, as Darwin would say, a whole batch of teetotalers. I almost cried to listen to him, and could not but lift my broad-brim at the end when he called for God's blessing on the vow these poor wretches had taken. I have seen nothing so religious since I set out on my travels as this squalid scene—nay, nothing properly religious at all."

He seems to have captured the Carlyles completely, for we find Mrs. Carlyle writing to her husband of the London visit:

"And now let me tell you something which you will, perhaps, think questionable—a piece of hero-worship that I have been after. My youthful enthusiasm is not extinct, then, as I supposed, but must certainly be immortal! Only think of its blazing up for Father Mathew! You know I have always had the greatest reverence for that priest; and when I heard that he was in London, attainable to me, I felt that I must see him, shake him by the hand, and tell

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him that I loved him considerably. . . . The place was a large piece of waste ground, boarded off from the Commercial Road for a Catholic cemetery. I found my youthful enthusiasm rising higher and higher as I got on the ground and saw the thousands of people all hushed into awful silence, with not a single exception that I saw—the only religious meeting I ever saw in Cockneyland which had not plenty of scoffers hanging on its outskirts.

“The crowd was all in front of a narrow scaffolding, from which an American captain was then haranguing it; and Father Mathew stood beside him, so good and simple-looking. . . . He made me sit down on the only chair for a moment, then took me by the hand, as if I had been a little girl, and led me to the front of the scaffold to see him administer the pledge. From a hundred to two hundred took it; and all the tragedies and theatrical representations I ever saw, melted into one, could not have given me such emotion as that scene did. There were faces, both of men and women, that will haunt me while I live; faces exhibiting such

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concentrated wretchedness, making, you would have said, its last deadly struggle with the powers of darkness. There was one man in particular, with a baby in his arms, and a young girl who seemed of the 'unfortunate' sort, that gave me an insight into the lot of humanity that I still wanted. And in the face of Father Mathew, when one looked from them to him, the mercy of Heaven seemed to be laid bare. 'I dare not be absent for an hour,' he said; 'I think always if some dreadful drunkard were to come, and me away, he might never muster determination to come again in all his life, and there would be a man lost!' I could not speak for excitement all the way home. When I went to bed I could not sleep. The pale faces I had seen haunted me, and Father Mathew's smile."

Again we find him in the correspondence between Mrs. Carlyle and her husband: and it is a wonderful testimony to Father Mathew that this bitter and sad couple should have had only sweetness for him.

"Poor Father Mathew is getting into deep waters here. He does not possess the

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Cockney strength of silence. His Irish blood gets up when he is angered, and he 'commits' himself. There is plainly a vast deal of party spirit taking the field to put him down. One thing they laugh at him for is, to my thinking, highly meritorious. Somebody, trying to stir up the crowd against him said: 'What good can come to you from that man, he is only a Popish monk?' Whereupon Father Mathew burst out: 'And what do you mean by saying no good can come from a Popish monk? Have you not received Christianity from a Popish monk?—the Reformation from a Popish monk, Martin Luther?' There was something so delightfully Irish, and liberal at the same time, in this double view of Luther."

The party spirit to which Mrs. Carlyle refers was aroused by the supposed alliance between the Temperance Movement and Repeal. Here in London Father Mathew found that O'Connell was hated, and Repeal the least likely thing to be granted. He foresaw trouble to come in Ireland: and Mr. Frank Mathew says he

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was profoundly depressed by the misery of the East End of London and the fierceness of the struggle for life which goes on in that City of Dreadful Night. Compared with its miseries the splendours of Mayfair assumed a terrible aspect of their own. How could a man of burning sympathies like his go to and fro between the extremities of poverty and wealth? He was glad when it was at an end and he could go back to his own people not yet acquainted with the overcrowded life in which people must fight like wild beasts for a spot on which to stand, a space of air to breathe, a miserable dole of food to keep life in their clamouring bodies.

But he had solid results of his pilgrimage. By the time he left London he had administered the pledge to 600,000 people, and by so much reduced the mass of misery and crime. The only notable incident of the homeward journey was the great meeting at Norwich, to which Stanley, the Bishop, welcomed him with eulogium which shows better than blame the gulf which at that time opened between Protestant and Catholic.

And he had learnt something on his own

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side. By the immensity of London he recognized the littleness of Cork, where he was glad to be again. He hardly needed lessons in liberality, but he was convinced that the difficulties between England and Ireland were due to misunderstanding:

“What we should pray for is the growth of common sense,” he said. “When the English get the common sense to give us Justice, and we get the common sense to be content with Justice and stop quarrelling between ourselves, there will be fair days for the Old Country yet.”

CHAPTER X

THE DOWN GRADE

A SPECIMEN letter from Father Mathew's enormous post-bag may be found of interest, and this is one of many of a similar purport. It may safely be said that no Englishman could write such a letter, and one can imagine that Father Mathew smiled over the reading. One only wishes that his answer to it was side by side with the letter :

“ Ballyhooly, May ye 2nd.

“ Very Revd. Father—Its with much pleasure that I have to announce to you that I am a Loyal member of Yr. Society, now nearly six years. And During that time I not only kept from any kind of Spirituous liquors, but in one of the Visits Yr. Very Revd. person paid one of my Neighbouring Villages, I renewed my Pledge Against Any of the other Stuffs that I frequently



How Father Mathew stopped Her Majesty's Mails.

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Saw teetotallers make use of, Such as soda, peppermt, ginger ale, cordial, lemonade, &c., &c., and all such things. I Entirely avoided them, one and all. I happened last winter, through Excessive labour, to Get a a very heavy fit of Sickness, Which both Emaciated and Debilitated me, Very much. I had as good Nourishm^t as Any Poor man in Spere of life, could have, And all was not serving me. I was ordered by a friendly Neighbour of mine, to Drink, a large tumbler of Punch, that would be hot, Strong and Sweet, with a large lump of Butter melted upon it, and take it sitting in my bed, before I'd Settle myself to Sleep, this was, in order to remove the Pains out of my bones, which at the Same time, I was very bad with, then, tho bad I was, I did not do it until I'd See more about it. I got a Stick, And walked with its help, down to my Priest's House, (for I considered leave was very light,) and told him all as I have here stated, And what he told me was, to drink Some whey, that it was Very Good; and that I, at that hour of the Night, or Even Season of the Year, had no more

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Getting of whey, or anything to make whey of, than I had of Spanish wine, in the miserable Street of Ballyhooly, or its Vicinity. I then returned home, Not pleased at my disappointment^t. He feared, I suppose that I'd return to drink again at my Six Years end, like a Dog to his Vomit, but I do assure both him and You, that I'd do no such thing, but Sir, when I come back from my Priest, I acted my own Physician, I sent for a Noggin of Spirits, made punch of it, mixed my butter with it, and Drank it off, in God's name. And whether it was occasioned by I being in the latter end of my fit, or the drinking of the punch I know not, but thank God, I slept that night very sound, perspired much, and was relieved next morning, And Since, this is a clear and true confession. Now Sir, I took my pledge, July 19th 1839, And at that time, the No. was 14,449. And my name is John O' All this you'll find in Yr. Book. Now, in consequence of age, hard labour, & fatigue, and Dejection of Spirits, I'd want Some additional nourishment^t and I trust on this application Yr. revec. will be pleased to allow me Some

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two or three, Pints Glasses, tumblers, or Dandies, (not Cider) And I'll continue temperate, but not a teetotaller, otherwise if you don't comply with this request, I'll Decently convey the tokens to Cork, but I'll never Drink, without your permission, while I have them, I Expect an Affirmative answer to this, by return of Post, I remain with every Possible mark of respect, And with all the ceremony of complem^{ts}. Y^r. rev^{ces}. Very Ob^t. Humble Serv^t. a teetotaller yet.

“John O'”

To many such letters as this he replied in the only hours he could get for his correspondence, the hours when others slept: one can imagine that the order of release was not lightly granted.

At this time poor Father Mathew had his secret cares. As might be expected, he was head over ears in debt. He owed seven thousand pounds at the time when his traducers were saying that he had enriched himself and his family by the Temperance Movement. He had been always giving: and he fared no worse than other great

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servants of mankind, no worse than his Master, the great Lover of Humanity, when his motives and his deeds were vilified. At a public banquet in Cork on St. Stephen's Day, 1844, his trouble for a moment stood revealed, with what must have been a curious effect at such a scene of festivity.

"Your Chairman has wished me many days of happiness," he said. "I must say I enjoy very few moments of happiness. My heart is eaten up with care and solicitude of every kind."

The accusation that he had made money out of the movement was something he could not endure. As a matter of fact he had spent all his resources on it. Dealing with these days of trouble, Maguire harks back to the great meeting held in the Theatre Royal, Dublin, in January, 1843, and we hear something at last of the fund supposed to have been raised on that occasion. "Not one in twenty of the fine folk who signed the requisition paid one farthing," wrote Peter Purcell, the convener of the meeting.

Father Mathew had expected to inherit some considerable sum from his friend, Lady

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Elizabeth Mathew, whose attachment for her "dear Toby" had only grown greater with the years. The day before her sudden death he was with her: "You will see, Toby," she said as they parted, "that I have not forgotten you, and I have kept my word." But when the will was opened his name did not appear in it, although a legacy was left to two of his sisters. And so vanished the sum which he had confidently looked to to pay all the debts of the Temperance Cause.

His arrest for debt, at the instance of a manufacturer of temperance medals, which took place while he was administering the pledge in Dublin, caused an immense sensation. The bailiff who was to arrest him knelt down before him, received his blessing, and then showed him the writ.

Public opinion was deeply shocked at learning of his straits. Meetings were called at once, private friends and admirers rushed to free him of his liabilities. 'It is pleasant to read that the English, among whom he had been so lately, were among the most generous givers. *Punch* delivered himself as follows:

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“Now, Mathew the martyr brought his fortune into the market to buy up vice; to bribe wretchedness into comfort; to purchase, with ready money, crime and passion that he might destroy them. He has laid out all his means, that he might make temperance alluring to an impulsive, whisky-loving people: he counts his tens of thousands of proselytes, and then, taking his purse, he counts nothing. He has triumphed, but he is a beggar. Taught by his temperance lessons, the peasant and artificer—aye, thousands of them—have made their homes more worthy of human creatures, and the teacher himself is shown the way to a gaol. Mathew is arrested for the price of the medals with which he decorated his army of converts—we know few orders, home or foreign, more honourable, if sincerely worn—and, unless Ireland arise as one man, the reward of the great preacher is the county prison.”

But, although for the time being Father Mathew was freed from embarrassment, the results were disastrous. People realized that the movement was bankrupt. And its ex-

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penses were still enormous. Among the poor people, who mainly made up its membership, faith was shaken in a bankrupt concern. The glory of its unparalleled success was gone. They began to ask each other whether the success had not been exaggerated after all. If it had been as it was represented would it have been bankrupt? And so on, and so on.

Though the debt was paid off, he was yet much harassed by money matters, for of course the enormous movement had enormous expenses: it ate up money as it went on. For the first time he had to hold his hand. Retrenching was the bitterest thing for him to practise, but he did it. Many of the temperance reading-rooms and clubs were closed because he could no longer finance them. One can imagine what suffering this must have caused him.

It was calamity all along the line. It would be easy to fill these pages with pleasant anecdotes of Father Mathew and his fellows—Maguire's biography is a very mine of such—but the history turns round to its end. What Father Mathew had fore-

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seen was about to happen. The Repeal Movement was coming to an end, and the Temperance Movement was inextricably mingled with it. Beyond the inevitable ending of these was the Famine, the Famine which was to lay Ireland waste, a sick body incapable of enthusiasms and movements. "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera."

The year 1843 was to have been the year of Repeal, according to O'Connell, who had the fatal gift of believing a thing because he wished to believe it.

"The hour is coming, the day is near, when, believe me, who have never deceived you, your country shall be a nation once more."

He counted too much on Peel's weakness and Wellington's old age. They had yielded before when he had fewer followers. They would yield now when he had five million behind him. But he was mistaken.

He had brought Ireland to the edge of a rising, a far more formidable rising it would have been than that of '98. His rhetoric had inflamed the minds of the peasants. They

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were ready to rise. England met them in the old way by pouring troops into the country. Certainly in a sense the Temperance Movement had prepared the people for insurrection by lifting them out of misery into reasonable-minded, sane citizenship.

“But what?” asks Carlyle, “what if history, somewhere on this planet, were to hear of a nation, the third soul of whom had not for thirty weeks each year as many third-rate potatoes as would sustain him? History in that case feels bound to consider that starvation is starvation; that starvation from age to age presupposes much. History ventures to assert that the French sans-culotte of '93, who, roused from long death-sleep, could rush at once to the frontiers, and die fighting for an immortal hope and faith of deliverance, for him and his, was but the second miserablest of men! The Irish ‘sans-potato,’ had he not senses then—nay, a soul? In his frozen darkness it was bitter for him to die famishing, bitter to see his children famish.”

The Irish peasant, *ante* Father Mathew, warming himself in his rags and misery

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with whatever strong drink he could lay hands upon, bought oblivion of the frozen darkness. Not so the clear-eyed, clear-headed teetotaler. England had made a bad job of Ireland when the history of the country had become a tale of recurrent famines.

O'Connell called a monster meeting at Clontarf for the 5th of October, 1843. Late in the afternoon of the 4th the Government proclaimed the meeting. Clontarf was held by troops. Tens of thousands of peasants were marching on Clontarf from the countryside. Massacre seemed inevitable: but if there had been massacre there would have been the world's opinion on the side of the rebellion. By delaying the proclamation till the last moment the Ministry had put themselves in a terrible position.

O'Connell saved them. From the day he had shot d'Esterre O'Connell had a horror of bloodshed. He was faced now with the responsibility for the lives of those tens of thousands whom he had driven mad with his eloquence: and it was too much for him. His energy flickered up in the effort to save the lives he had put in danger. He sent

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mounted messengers everywhere along the roads that led into Dublin to turn back the people. They obeyed him as they would have followed him to death, without asking why. The next morning the horse, foot, and artillery at Clontarf, the unlimbered guns and lit matches, waited for the peasantry, and waited in vain.

Little grateful for their delivery Peel's Government arrested O'Connell and imprisoned him in Richmond Prison. He was tried by a Protestant judge and jury, but his conviction was quashed by the English Court of Appeal because of the constitution of the jury. "Were such things to be allowed," said Lord Denman, "trial by jury would become a mockery, a delusion, and a snare."

In June, 1844, O'Connell was released, but his health was broken, and he publicly renounced his agitation for Repeal. For his few remaining years he was a leader only in name.

The exaltation of the people was followed by a reaction of despair. Those who did not lie down under despondency believed that

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the only hope now lay in conspiracy and revolt. With the new spirit in the country, a spirit which was being led by the young men of the *Nation*, Father Mathew was out of touch. He had openly opposed conspiracy and rebellion, and in so far the people must have felt that he was against them. After all, he was an old-fashioned country gentleman, naturally as much out of touch with the revolution as a French abbé or curé might have been with the spirit of '93.

He saw the danger of the Temperance movement losing its hold on the people. The glorious days were over. No wonder that "his heart was eaten up with care and solicitude of every kind."

CHAPTER XI

THE FAMINE

WHEN Sir Walter Raleigh brought the potato into Ireland he did the country an ill turn. It became in time the staple crop of the country and food of its people, who, reduced by laws that forbade them competing with English manufacturers, were entirely dependent upon agriculture, and this, too, in a country the climate of which marks it out as anything in the world but agricultural.

The Irish climate was particularly bad for the potato, and it follows as I have said that Irish history for some two or three hundred years had been a history of recurrent famines, with their corollary, famine-fevers. Cromwell's occupation of Ireland was dogged by the curse of the country. He mentions in a letter that the people are dying of famine and one of his Colonels dead of "the coun-

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try disease." It is said that in the famine of 1740 four hundred thousand people died. Living as scantily as they did the Irish people were marked out as the prey of any epidemic which happened to be prevalent. Cholera, famine, and famine-fever, with now and again a rebellion thrown in, dominate Irish history of the last two hundred years.

In July, 1845, the first blight destroyed the potatoes. That Winter there was bitter distress. A number of people died of starvation. Still it was the first year, and they had their little resources to tide them over. They got through the winter famine-stricken indeed, but alive for the greater part. And with the indomitable Celtic hopefulness they put the trouble behind them and looked forward to the good time ahead.

The potato crop flourished exceedingly during the summer of 1846 till July came round. On the edge of August the blight appeared again, this time more widespread than before. Writing to Trevelyan, the Secretary of the Treasury, Father Mathew says: "On the 27th of last month I passed from Cork to Dublin, and the doomed plant

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bloomed in all the luxuriance of an abundant harvest. Returning on the 3rd instant I beheld with sorrow one wide waste of putrefying vegetation. In many places the wretched people were seated on the fences of their decaying gardens, wringing their hands and wailing bitterly the destruction that had left them foodless."

The famine set in almost at once. The country was beggared by the famine of the preceding winter. The people had no one to whom they could turn. The priests were as poor as themselves. Of the landlords some of the more considerable were absentees. Others fled to London with their families at the first rumour of the famine-fever. Others, the best of them, remained, fought the famine and the fever with superb heroism, and in many cases died at their posts.

Even when famine-stricken the Irish peasants would not enter the workhouses, where all the blessed family ties were broken up and scattered, and where they were disgraced by the name of paupers. To die in the workhouse was the last ignominy.

The starving peasants flocked into the

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towns. They crowded the slums where at any time it was hard enough to live. "They brought the fever with them; fever-stricken they died in the streets: in the mornings their bodies lay at the doors of the houses: they filled the streets with fever. During the day they walked through the better streets silently asking aid. In the evenings they lay down in the streets or went to find shelter in the slums . . . After a time the barriers of self-respect were broken down. The workhouses were thronged; they were small and soon filled. Mad with hunger, mad with despair, the peasants beat at the closed doors, but could find neither help nor refuge. It was a cold and wild winter. They could not buy turf; they had neither fire nor light nor food. They saw their wives and children starving to death and could not help them."

So Mr. Frank Mathew. History repeated itself in the horrors of the famine. What Spenser wrote of the Desmond famine would have applied to this one three hundred years later. Some of the records are too horrible to be told.

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America and England helped generously when it was known that the famine was really loose upon the country. The Quakers were especially generous. Among those who came to distribute help was William Forster, one day to be Chief Secretary of Ireland and—alas and alas, the thousand pities of it!—to be known among the people as Buckshot Forster.

Forster wrote from Westport:

“The town of Westport was, in itself, a strange and fearful sight; like what we read of in beleaguered cities; its streets crowded with gaunt wanderers, sauntering to and fro, with hopeless air and hungerstruck look; a mob of starved, almost naked, women around the poorhouse, clamouring for soup tickets . . . At Bundorragha, out of a population of 240, I found 13 already dead from want. The survivors were like walking skeletons; the men stamped with the livid marks of hunger; the children crying with pain; the women, in some of the cabins, too weak to stand . . . At Cleggan the distress was appalling—far beyond my powers of description. I was quickly sur-

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rounded by a mob of men and women, more like famished dogs than fellow-creatures, whose figures, looks, and cries, all showed that they were suffering the ravening agony of hunger. When we entered a village, our first question was, 'How many deaths?' 'The Hunger is upon us!' was everywhere the cry; and, involuntarily, we found ourselves regarding this hunger as we should an epidemic, looking upon starvation as a disease. In fact, as we went along, our wonder was not that the people died, but that they lived; and I have no doubt whatever that in any other country the mortality would have been far greater, and that many lives have been prolonged, perhaps saved, by the long apprenticeship to want in which the Irish peasant has been trained, and by that lovely, touching charity which prompts him to share his scanty meal with his starving neighbour."

Again to quote Mr. Frank Mathew:

"To Father Mathew the victims of the famine were people whom he knew, and who loved him; his followers, his friends. His memory brought before him the names

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and the faces of those starving in the smallest outlandish villages. These, whom he knew and loved, were starving to death because there was no one in the world to give them a crust of bread or the skin of a potato. He moved heaven and earth; he worked night and day; he wrote to English ministers, and to Irish officials, to friends in England, Scotland, or America, begging for help, or money. He organized the relief work in the South; he travelled over Ireland unceasingly; no man could have done more. Many he had never heard of wrote to him, from all parts of the world. He worked all day long; he sat half the night answering letters. He spent hours daily kneeling by death-beds in loathsome slums and haunts of the fever."

In December Father Mathew wrote to Trevelyan:

"There are, at this moment, more than five thousand half-starved, wretched beings from the country begging in the streets of Cork. When utterly exhausted they crawl to the workhouse to die. The average of deaths in this Union is over 100 a week. I

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deeply regret the total abandonment of the people to corn and flour dealers. They charge 50 to 100 per cent. profit. We are establishing soup shops in all parts of the city to supply the poor with nutritious and cheap cooked food."

Two months later he wrote: "The soup kitchens are affording very great relief. We are in a deplorable state in Cork from the influx into the city of ten thousand foodless, homeless people, young and old, from several counties round. I am in horror whilst I walk the streets, and I return to my besieged dwelling in sadness and hopelessness. The workhouse has been closed, and there is no refuge for these miserable creatures."

He pestered the Treasury with his prayers for the people. He wanted the Government to buy up Indian meal and retail it in Ireland at a penny a pound; but the Government declined to interfere with the rights of private owners who were carrying out of the country the corn that would have saved precious human lives. Soon he had another cause for grief. In every place where the Government started public relief works the public-house

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sprang up. Who could blame the poor creatures if they entered them? God knows there were things they would have purchased oblivion from! And the emaciated bodies and wandering wits were the worst subjects in the world for drink. This added heavily to Father Mathew's nightmare of trouble during this horrible winter.

Again let me quote from Mr. Frank Mathew:

“They had one refuge; his name was a household word among them. Many, on reaching Cork, went straight to his house. They knew he would never turn a deaf ear to them; that as long as he had anything in the world to give them he would gladly give. Only too often he had nothing to give them. Every penny he possessed, the very food bought for his own plain meals, went to them; but many had to be turned away with empty hands, refused with an aching heart. Often there was no food left in the house; often every room in the house was full at night of peasants he had brought in from the streets and sheltered. By this time the peasants had passed from frenzied despair

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to a heartbroken resignation. They passed through three stages; at first they faced starving manfully, too proud to accept grudging help; then they were mad with despair; then they were full of a hopeless resignation. 'The hunger is on us; 'tis the will of God. The will of God be done!'"

After a time the cities grew tired of their gruesome invasion. Orders were issued that the starving men should return whence they came, and that those found in the streets should be arrested, and taken forcibly some distance into the open country. So, every morning, carts were to be seen laden with these gaunt ruins of men and women. They made neither resistance nor remonstrance; they had lost all hope.

That Winter of '47 the potatoes were again blighted, and this was the worst of the three famine years. There is no use dwelling on the horrors of those days during which Father Mathew's work went down with a million dead peasants. It is hard to realize that there could have been so recently, at the gates of England, a holocaust of a million dead of starvation. But so it was.

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In April, 1847, Father Mathew was nominated for the Bishopric of Cork, but Rome did not accept the nomination, perhaps wisely. He could hardly have carried on his Temperance propaganda as a Bishop. Besides he was as unpractical as ever. He was again in debt. If he had always been loving and giving, judge what little chance there was of refusing during the three years of the Famine.

In June of the same year Queen Victoria granted him a Civil List pension of £300 a year, which was a great relief, since it enabled him to pay for an insurance on his life sufficiently great to cover his debts.

That winter he travelled all over Ireland, distributing seed and money; trying to lift up his great cause again; feeling more and more the hopelessness of it. The peasants were beyond enthusiasm about anything. The great clearances had begun. There was nothing but ruin for everybody in Ireland, landlord and tenant alike. The sooner the people were cleared out of their miserable holdings where they were at the mercy of the blight year after year and given a

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fresh start in a new country, the better. So said the landlords; and indeed they were not without right on their side. The Irish country was only fit for pasturage. The climate was against anything else. In front of the landlords yawned the Encumbered Estates Act as the coffin-ship yawned for the peasant.

Multitudes were evicted and sailed for America. Some of the ships were unseaworthy and were never heard of again. All were overcrowded. The fever broke out on them and thousands died. Those who landed in America were for the greater part fatally weakened in constitution. In Canada alone 20,000 died after landing.

During that last winter people pleaded with Father Mathew to spare himself. He was changed: haggard and worn and sad. "My dear, I am the strongest man in Ireland," he would say.

But the trouble was killing him. He worked on and on, keeping the Lenten feasts rigorously at a time when during Lent in Ireland only one meal was eaten, and that not till 12 o'clock. On a day in

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April, 1848, he sent for a doctor who found him in bed.

“What is the matter, Father Mathew?” he asked.

“My dear, I am paralyzed,” he said. And it was true. He had had a stroke of paralysis which affected one side.

CHAPTER XII

AMERICA

HE had sufficiently recovered by June, 1849, to carry out the visit to America which he had long planned and ardently desired. His friends were against his undertaking it, for he was broken in health, and although the paralysis had passed for the time being he always dreaded its return.

However, he was still a masterful man, and he went, travelling out among a ship-load of emigrants and very glad to be of their company.

In New York he had a reception which was like the old days in Leeds and Liverpool and London. He found New York crowded with the poor Irish, who in rags and tatters came down to the docks to greet him, ready to eat him with love. They had not listened to him when he had entreated

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them not to stay in the towns, but to push out into the country, where fat land was theirs for the taking. But the gregariousness of the Irish was their ruin: and here they were in the slums, among their own country-people, having transported their poverty over the seas, while the rich lands called to them in vain.

There had now been a failure of the potatoes and consequent famine for four dark winters in Ireland. There had also been the abortive rebellion of '48, with the transportation of men whom Father Mathew loved. Trouble enough, God knows! but it did not break down his amazing energy, his passion for humanity which made him a fighter till the day he died.

In Boston of the Pilgrim Fathers he most unwillingly found himself involved in the Abolitionist controversy. He had signed some years previously an Irish declaration in favour of the abolition of slavery. Boston had seemed far enough away from him in those days. He had not realized that the day would come when he and his movement would be called on to take sides in politics,

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a course he had always dreaded for the movement and himself.

New York, already on its knees before the dollar—Father Mathew characteristically warned them against the love of gold, he in whose pocket a stray coin burnt a hole till it escaped—had smiled at the Abolitionists as Boston cranks. In Boston of the Pilgrim Fathers it was a burning question: and the Abolitionists, remembering that Irish declaration, welcomed Father Mathew as one of themselves. More, they required him to carry on their propaganda side by side with his own. In the Northern States the Abolitionists were looked upon as troublesome people. In the Southern they were hated. Here was an *impasse* for poor Father Mathew, who wanted to keep all the world his friends so that he might lead them to Temperance.

He refused to preach Abolitionist doctrines from the Temperance platforms, and was denounced by the leading Abolitionists. This was an unfortunate thing for him at the start, for he had estranged both sides, those in favour of slavery by the declaration

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of 1842, now brought up freshly, and those in favour of Abolition by refusing to do what they asked.

In Washington he was received with great honour. A unanimous resolution of Congress admitted him to the floor of the House, where all the members rose to welcome him.

He had been invited to Georgia by Governor Lumpkin, but now the Governor wrote, drawing his attention to the declaration of 1842, and asking him if he was prepared to recant. Father Mathew's gentle, even blarneying answer did not turn away wrath and the invitation to Georgia was cancelled.

But his propitiatory letter to Governor Lumpkin had brought down upon him on the other side the indignation of the Abolitionists. "A humiliating production," the Anti-Slavery Association of Massachusetts dubbed it in a public and widely-circulated resolution. Poor Father Mathew! It must have taken all his sense of humour to enable him to bear with any equanimity these somewhat—at this distance—ridiculous happenings.

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However, he went to the South, despite Governor Lumpkin, and was not a penny the worse for all the storms. The South was kind to him. To be sure he who had been out of place among the arid Northerners had a personality which appealed to the Southerners. He might hate slavery, but he loved the South. And the South loved him and followed him. At Savannah he enrolled a thousand in a single day. At New Orleans he made fourteen thousand converts.

Again let me quote Mr. Frank Mathew :

“He hated slavery, but he could not hate the South. His heart was rather with the slaveholder than with the Abolitionist; both had quarrelled with him, but he felt only for the Southern men; he well understood their quick temper and warm hearts, but the bitterness of the Abolitionists was harder to forgive. The latter-day Puritans, like their spiritual ancestors, had the art of making virtue supremely unattractive.

“At this time most of the Northern men were not Abolitionists, and he had seen many instances of the popular dislike for coloured folk. Once, riding in an omnibus

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in New York, he saw a negro run over; he at once ran to help him. 'Lift him in,' he said, 'and we can take him to the nearest doctor.' 'No, no,' said his fellow-passengers, 'we cannot travel with coloured people.' In the South he only saw the best side of slavery; he saw many houses where the coloured folk were happy and well-treated, and he had many stories to tell of the old-fashioned life of the planters, and of the darkies singing their quaint songs on the plantations at night. He would gladly have given his life to win freedom for the slaves; but he never forgot the unbounded kindness of their masters. The South was well fitted to fascinate an Irishman; its tropical beauty was endless delight to the Celtic love of colour; its virtues were those the Irish most reverence—courage, hospitality, and kindness; and as for its faults—extravagance, pride, excessive festivity, and absurd quarrelsomeness—why, they, too, were not unknown in Tipperary. The Southern men, like the Celts, were sentimentalists. What true Celt could hear 'Maryland' or 'Dixie' without being spellbound?"

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In June there was an idyllic pause in his work. For a fortnight he rested among the Arkansas woods, in a log-cabin, waited upon by a couple of black servants. At first the peace of the woods delighted him: the quaintness of Black Molly and her curly-headed son appealed to his humorous, affectionate nature. But he could not long rest. The sight of blackberries ripening on the bough brought back to him Thomas-town and Rathcloheen, fast being emptied of those who had grown up with him, boys and girls. He wanted to be back in Ireland, to begin again the work the famine had undone. He used to talk about it all as though he could see it:

“ With a full clearness, as if he saw them before him, he would speak of the dirty Irish towns, the horrible slums, the crowded pot-houses, where the peasants sat drinking the poisonous cheap whisky, the streets at night disgraced by drunkards. He spoke as if he saw the naked hovels through the length and breadth of Ireland, where through the long night-hours the wife was crouching over the turf fire, with the firelight fitfully



Father Mathew and the unwilling recruit.

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lighting the pinched faces of the little sleeping children, and her haggard watchfulness, waiting for her husband to reel home; as if he saw Pat himself reeling home along the lonely road, blind-drunk, shouting and yelling, and brandishing his shillelagh at an imaginary army of 'Sassenach divils.'

"Only five years before, it had seemed, that, with God's help, he had changed all this, had brought happiness to these wretched homes, had led these poor folk to a nobler life. Now—oh! the pity of it—so much of his work was undone, so many had fallen back into wretchedness. When there was such crying need of his help what right had he to linger here, thousands of miles from home, to dawdle out of sound of the struggle,

Here in this forest inaccessible,
Under the shade of melancholy boughs,
Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time?"

The contrast between the sleepy tropical forest and the wild landscape for which his heart yearned made his longing to return unendurable.

He had to get back to work. He wanted

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ardently to buy Molly and Pete and set them free, but he could by no manner of means raise the money.

But he had much to do before he could go home. At Pensacola Naval Dockyard, where his meeting took place on a Sunday in the great hall of the hospital, the chaplain held no service, so that he and the men might be free to attend Father Mathew's Mass, for which a temporary altar had been erected.

He was delighted with the absence of religious bigotry in America, although once he broke out in passionate protest against being welcomed, in some out-of-the-way place, "*Not* as a Roman priest, but as a preacher of Temperance."

"I am proud," he said, "justly proud, of being a humble servant in that holy Church which has done so much for the glory of God and the civilization of mankind, which has stood bravely in the van unchanged from age to age, which has outlived, and shall outlive, both calumny and oppression." After this impetuous outburst he calmed down, and went on to say that his lifework

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of temperance was for all men alike, and that in it he "recognized no religious denomination whatever." The townsmen, who had been "proud, justly proud," of the tolerance they showed in extending the hand of fellowship to a Romish priest, were astounded by his indignation; still, when he left them, they parted the best of friends.

He wrote from St. Louis in October:

"The success that has attended my exertions in the City of St. Louis has exceeded my most sanguine expectations. Nine thousand persons have taken the total abstinence pledge, and when you are informed that I have not been able to lecture in the temperance halls from infirmity, you must deem it a very considerable number. I yearn after the Old Country, and I envy this letter, which is so soon to reach its shores; but I fear to return home, so much is expected by my creditors. If I had foreseen my illness I would not have incurred debt, which makes me miserable. But apprehending no impediments to my career, and having well-grounded pecuniary expectations, I imprudently yielded to my

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feelings: and to uphold the teetotalers, and to feed the hungry during the famine, I unhappily incurred liabilities which can only be liquidated by my death." All his debts were eventually paid by his policies of insurance.

Even now his wonderful memory for faces did not fail him.

"The man or woman," says Maguire, "whom he had spoken to years before in any part of Ireland he at once recognized, whether in the streets of New York or New Orleans, or on the lower deck of a steamboat on the Mississippi. Many a poor exile's heart was cheered by the greeting, 'How are you, my dear? When did you leave ——? When did you hear from your father and mother?' Names as well as faces he retained in that wonderful memory, and often his secretary was surprised at hearing him address people whom he could not have seen later than seven or eight years before, in a northern county in Ireland, familiarly by their name, as if he had only left them the day before."

He spent three months in New Orleans,

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working without pause. On the Mississippi he was struck down by illness, but rallied. Then he was at it again, despite the warnings of his doctors. "The night cometh wherein no man may work." His desire for work was as unslaked as though he had not years of superhuman exertion behind him: and there was so little time in which to do it.

Speaking at Cincinnati he said, pathetically:

"The growing infirmities of age, aggravated by the repeated attacks of a dangerous and insidious malady, now require retirement and repose. At the close of a long and, thank Heaven, a successful campaign, I find myself, it is true, enfeebled in health, shattered in constitution, and destitute of the world's wealth; yet, with the Apostle, I glory in my infirmity, contracted as it has been in the noblest of causes, and I still feel that no sacrifice—whether of health, of property, or of life itself—is too great to save from ruin and perdition the humblest of those for whom our divine Saviour has willingly shed His most precious blood."

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In November, 1850, he said farewell to America, where he had been for some sixteen or seventeen months.

“Father Mathew, since his arrival in New York,” said the *New York Herald*, “has visited twenty-five States of the Union, has administered the pledge in over three hundred of our principal towns and cities, has added more than half a million of our population to the long muster-roll of his disciples, and in accomplishing this praiseworthy object has travelled thirty-seven thousand miles, which, added to two voyages across the Atlantic, would make a total distance nearly equal to twice the circumnavigation of the globe.”

Not a bad record of work for a man broken in health and upwards of sixty years of age. He had gone out not so much to win American citizens over to Temperance as to reclaim his own poor lost sheep, the Irish who had once been his followers, but had broken through their pledges.

To them, in his farewell address, he delivered some words of admonition which recall the days when he was father, friend,

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everything to them; when he alone could tell them the truth while O'Connell was dazzling them with fine empty words, the tradition of which among Irish orators has not ceased in our day.

“ . . . will you not, by studying self-respect and acquiring habits suited to your new position, aspire to reflect honour alike on the land of your birth and of your adoption? I implore you, as I would with my dying breath, to discard for ever those foolish divisions, those insensate quarrels, those factious broils (too often, alas! the fruits of intemperance), in which your country is disgraced, the peace and order of society violated, and the laws of Heaven trampled on and outraged. . . .”

He had not given up his work, but he felt, and felt rightly, that the strenuous days of a most strenuous life were over for him.

CHAPTER XIII

“EVER A FIGHTER”

FATHER MATHEW came back to a country in which at last the Famine years had come to an end. It was sadly changed. The generous party of Young Ireland had disappeared. Politics were still to the fore. The unhappy country was now being exploited by the Sadleir party, rotten to the core. The ruin which had befallen the peasants had come upon the landlords. Estate after estate was being sold up, under the Encumbered Estates Act, and their owners sent into exile. The old happy, gay, wild days were over. The new days were set in, in which Irishmen are merry in spite of things which do not make for merriment.

His cause had been going from bad to worse. Everywhere he saw signs of its failure. He had hardly landed before he

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met in the streets of Dublin an artist who had once been a man of brilliant promise, and was now a wretched drunkard. The drunkard caught his hand and kissed it passionately. The priest folded him in his arms. “Poor child! poor child!” he said, with tears, and would have held the poor sinner, but the despairing man broke from him and fled.

His old servant, John, had died during his absence. “Don’t, sir, don’t go among those bloody-minded savages!” had been his prayer when Father Mathew’s American mission was mooted. Cantankerous as John had been, and not irreproachable from the temperance point of view, Father Mathew missed his old servant sadly.

His own people found him looking old and tired. The great activities of life were over for him. He gave up the Little Friary and went to live with his brother Charles, at Lehenagh House, a country mansion surrounded by trees, on a hillside near Cork, within sound of Shandon Bells. Here the evening of his life was placid enough. He was adored by his own family, who bowed

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to his ruling pretty well in everything. It is not recorded even that Charles Mathew grumbled when the sylvan quietness of Lehenagh was broken by the Temperance Bands from Cork, and the flock of beggars that were always to be found wherever Father Mathew was.

It is to be feared that the priest did not discriminate between impostors and genuine cases. "Even if their stories are untrue," he would say, "one thing is certain, and that is that they are in bitter want."

The Irish beggars are the wittiest and most audacious rogues in Christendom, and there must have been many a good story sent round at Lehenagh in payment for the hospitality. It is recorded that the beggars after being helped occasionally came back twice, and even thrice, in the one day, trusting to Father Mathew's failing vision not to recognize them. He was never taken in: but he often smiled to think that they believed he was.

Then again there was the usual long string of people coming to take the pledge.

"Many an absurd and many a painful

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scene,” says Maguire, “would be witnessed before that hall-door, as some tattered creature broke away from his wretched wife, but was again captured and brought to Father Mathew, who had witnessed the flight and capture with intense interest, and tottered down the stone steps and along the avenue to meet the prize half-way. Once within his influence opposition was out of the question.”

And Mr. Frank Mathew tells of these peaceful days:

“He rose daily at five; he spent the whole day over work for the cause, or welcoming his ‘children’—the poorer and more wretched they were the more they were welcomed; and the prodigal children were the most welcome of all.

“Even during the family meals, if he saw some ragged pauper coming, he would go out at once, and at last his brother had to give the keeper of the lodge secret orders to let no one pass during meal-times. In the evenings, when the day’s work was over, Father Mathew would sit in front of the house, chatting pleasantly, or relishing the

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stillness of the summer twilight, broken by no sound except the cawing of the rooks in the high branches, by no movement except the stealthy creeping of the shadows across the lawn and the rooks drowsily floating from tree to tree."

When the winter came it was not so pleasant at Lehenagh. The rooms were big and draughty, and he complained of the cold. One day in February, 1853, his sister-in-law heard the noise of a heavy fall, and running to his room found him lying on the floor insensible. He had had another stroke.

From this too he rallied, though for a time he was very ill.

"Once during this winter," says Mr. Frank Mathew, "as he was driving into Cork, he met a small boy, a workman's son. 'Oh, Father,' said the boy, 'we are going to have such a nice dinner; won't you come in and have some?' 'And what are you going to have for dinner, my dear?' 'We have a fine leg of mutton, and turnips, and potatoes, Father.' 'And do you mean to say that you haven't any cakes?' The child owned the deficiency. 'Why, then, my dear, you must

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have them,’ said the priest, giving him half-a-crown. The next time he drove into Cork he came back looking depressed. ‘What is the matter, sir; has anything annoyed you?’ asked his sister-in-law. ‘My dear, I received many invitations to dinner from many little boys to-day’”: by which anecdote it would seem that some of his merry heart at least went all the way with him.

Another good act of the British Government was an ease to his poor heart in those failing days. The Board of Works, from which he had borrowed a thousand pounds to build his Church in Cork, remitted this debt in 1854.

That spring he went back to Cork, but again broke down. He was ordered to a milder climate, and spent the following winter in Madeira. He came back in the summer and resumed his work, but was not long able to go on with it: and once again his brother’s hospitable house welcomed him. He was now content to remain there. The old fiery energy was all gone. He grew daily quieter. Once when he was saying Mass he staggered and nearly fell. He was

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afraid to say Mass again, and this was a bitter deprivation to him.

But he was not to die at Lehenagh: he left it with grief to winter at Queenstown. As Mr. Frank Mathew says: "Many pleasant days had been spent there: many children's feasts had been held under those great trees on the wide lawn."

That is a pathetic picture which the same brilliant writer gives of the broken days of the man who had swept half the world with his fiery will and energy.

"Men who remember seeing Father Mathew during these last days, tottering through the streets of Queenstown, leaning on a boy's shoulder, white-haired and shattered, speak of him with something of the same feeling. When he was strong, could sway great meetings, could hold thousands spellbound, making them break the shackles of ingrained habit, he was honoured; now that he was helpless he was revered.

"These were dark days. The gloom was thickening about him; he was crushed by melancholy; old and broken, he was passing through the Valley of the Shadow. He had

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long been out of love with life, though while in health he was always cheery, a man loving bright faces and light hearts. Now that he had no more hope of further work, it was terrible to him to see his cause falling, his past work undone. It seemed to him at times that in this reaction his cause was doomed. He saw drunkards staggering through the streets, he knew that all over Ireland great numbers had fallen away and broken the pledge, that many who had once followed him had been killed by drink. His whole heart was in his cause. Now his power was gone; he saw the people dying, and could not help them; the curse coming again on Ireland, and he could not keep it off. It was a martyrdom to be forced to look on helpless. He looked on his past with great humility and bitter self-reproach. ‘If only I had taken up the work of temperance sooner! If only my motives were always pure in the sight of God—no man can be pure in the sight of God!’”

In December, 1856, he had his last stroke. Henceforth he lay quiet, only able to move his hands a little, just enough to bless the

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poor drunkards who were brought to his bedside to take the pledge. One can imagine the pledge taken in such circumstances to be more binding than any pledge administered in the great days. He died on the 8th of December, 1856. Even when he was dead the great sadness did not pass from his face. "Surely someone is troubling him," said an old servant who knelt to pray by him.

He received what we Irish always give our heroes, a great funeral: as though we would make up to them in death for the hurt we gave them in life. People flocked to see him lying in state in his Franciscan habit in the Church he had built in Cork, and fifty thousand followed him to the grave. He had chosen to be buried in Cork—"among his children," rather than with his own people in Tipperary.

So passed away Theobald Mathew, who did a marvellous work in his life-time, and saw much of it at last crumble to pieces before his eyes. Yet his work must have had far-reaching results beyond the years in which the statistics were triumphant in his

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favour. It is always easier to see the failures than the successes. To-day Ireland is becoming temperate under the influence of the Gaelic League, and of the strenuous efforts in Father Mathew's field of his spiritual brethren in Ireland, to say nothing of other workers. How much of this harvest may not have sprung from the seed sown by Father Mathew?

After all in the long run the history of the world comes to be not so much a record of happenings as a record of men. Wars and peace, progress and retrogression, are but the swing of the pendulum. Time goes on for all that: and it is the imperishable figures of men that remain and make history. There stands Theobald Mathew, lover of his kind, clothed with immortality.

He ventured neck or nothing—heaven's success
Found, or earth's failure:

“Wilt thou trust death or not?” He answered: “Yes!
Hence with life's pale lure!”

That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it.

This high man with a great thing to pursue
Dies ere he knows it.

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That low man goes on adding one to one,—
A hundred 's soon hit.
This high man aiming at a million
Misses an unit.

That has the world here. Should he need the next
Let the world mind him !
This throws himself on God and unperplexed
Seeking, shall find him.

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